

Killed in attack on ANC rally

KATLEHONG, South Africa (AP) — One journalist was killed and two were wounded when shots were fired at an African National Congress (ANC) delegation touring this embattled black township. Police said a township resident was shot to death by police in running gun battles following the shooting at the ANC delegation led by Secretary Cyril Ramaphosa and Communist Party leader Joe Slovo, alone with a crowd of journalists covering the tour. Abdul Sharif, 31, a South African freelance photographer on assignment for the Associated Press, was shot once in the chest and pronounced dead at Natafupi hospital in Katlehong. Charles Moikanyang, a television reporter for the South African Broadcasting Corporation, was in stable condition at the hospital with a bullet wound to the hip. A radio reporter, Antha Warner, sustained a flesh wound.

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Syria: Peace depends on Israel's stand

DAMASCUS (AP) — A week before Syrian leader Hafez Al Assad's summit with President Bill Clinton, Syria argued that achieving peace depends entirely on a turnaround in Israel's negotiating positions. The government-run Tishrin newspaper said peace "does not hinge on Syria and the Arabs alone but is rather conditional on a full change in the Israeli stand." In its front-page editorial, the newspaper called on Washington to "use its weight in terms of pressuring Israel ... and ending occupation."

U.S. team fails to show up in Lebanon

BEIRUT (R) — A U.S. delegation expected to visit Lebanon's eastern Bekaa Valley Sunday seeking information on Israeli soldiers missing in Lebanon failed to appear. Security sources in Beirut said earlier that the assistants to U.S. congressmen would travel from Damascus to Sultan Yaqoub, a small town in the Bekaa Valley where a three-man Israeli tank crew went missing in 1982 during one of Israel's invasions of Lebanon. Reporters in Sultan Yaqoub saw no sign of the delegation by nightfall (see related story on page 2).

Currency reform could earn Syria billions'

By Nermene Murad
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

DAMASCUS (R) — An official newspaper estimated on Sunday that Syrian businessmen could bring home billions of dollars in investment if Syria adopts a single exchange rate for its pound currency. "There is no justification for the existence of more than one exchange rate for the pound in light of the economic recovery which we are witnessing," Tishrin newspaper said in a commentary. The Syrian pound exchanges at 11.20 against the dollar in all official transactions. A second rate of 42 to the dollar is set for tourists and private businessmen. Four other rates are used for airline travel, customs, medical treatment abroad and official travel. The black market rate is at about 50 to the dollar.

Dr. Anani, one of Jordan's key economic planners in the Arab-Israeli peace negotiations, stressed that the signing of the accord had put an end to sensitivities over separating the Jordanian and Palestinian identities.

Jordanian critics of the accord have contended that the agreement failed to meet expectations for concrete cooperation and coordination between Jordan and the emerging Palestinian entity.

Dr. Fahed Fanek, a prominent economist and newspaper columnist, said most of the accord's articles "represented no more than Arabic prose."

"We can practically ignore all the articles starting with the

word 'encouragement' as legally meaningless ... even the mere encouragement of joint projects will be on hold until another agreement is reached," Dr. Fanek said.

Palestinian political observers were earlier quoted as saying Friday's accord cannot be treated as a comprehensive economic agreement but a broad framework of economic cooperation and that Jordan did not go far enough in asserting the separate identities of the two sides.

"They insisted on asserting their own identity and on the PLO acting as a government," Dr. Anani said. Jordan did not have any problems in this context, he added, but that there are issues that had to be determined before Jordan and the PLO went to further economic talks with Israel and this could not wait.

The minister explained that the issues of "identity" had overlaps with the workings of a sovereign authority, and this, at this point in time, was not a subject which Israel would discuss.

As such, he said, the economic accord has now set a base for both sides in negotiating with Israel.

He said the PLO's delay in signing the earlier economic agreement was also prompted by a Palestinian belief that such a detailed agreement should only be signed and implemented when the Palestinian authority takes control on the ground.

The PLO felt, according to

Dr. Anani said the main point of contention between Jordanian and PLO officials during the three days of talks that led to the agreement was that the draft accord of October did not go far enough in asserting the separate identities of the two sides.

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(Continued on page 5)

PLO Executive Committee adopts accord with Jordan

TUNIS (AFP) — The Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) Executive Committee has approved a cooperation accord signed with Jordan and reviewed the progress of economic negotiations with Israel. PLO sources said Sunday.

The committee met overnight Saturday under the chairmanship of Yasser Arafat to listen to briefings by the organisation's political department chief Farouk Kadoudi on the Jordan negotiations and Ahmad Qouriea, the head of the delegation holding economic talks with Israel in Paris.

The Jordan-PLO accord was signed Friday. Both sides have praised the agreement, which calls for setting up Jordanian banks and using the Jordanian dinar in the occupied territories as the main currency, cooperating in trade and investing jointly in industry, agriculture, tourism, health and other domains.

The Executive Committee endorsed the agreement, member Ali Ishak told AFP.

The PLO executive also reviewed the latest achievements in talks held with Israel on economic cooperation, based on a report by Mr. Qouriea.

The next round of economic talks will be held Monday and Tuesday.

"We have not registered tangible progress," said a member of the PLO executive committee who requested anonymity.

"Any progress in the economic talks remains dependent on the evolution of the political negotiations process," Mr. Ishak said.

The economic cooperation talks have snagged over the question of finance and money with the PLO insisting on issuing its own currency and central bank as part of the future autonomy.

King arrives in London en route to U.S. for medical check-ups, Clinton meeting



His Royal Highness Prince Mohammad is sworn in as Regent before His Majesty King Hussein left for Britain en route to the U.S. (Petra)

and Queen Noor arrived in London.

Upon leaving Amman earlier in the day, the King was seen off at the airport by His Royal Highness Prince Mohammad, the personal representative of the King.

His Royal Highness Prince Abdullah and members of the royal family. They were also seen off by Prime Minister

Abdul Salam Al Majali, Royal Court Chief Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker, Upper House of Parliament Speaker Ahmad Al Lawzi, Lower House Speaker Taher Al Masri, the King's advisers, Chief Chamberlain Prince Ra'ad Ben Zeid, Private Chamberlain Prince Ali Ben Nayef, Crown Prince Hassan's private adviser Moham-

mad Al Saqqaf, the Cabinet members, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the directors of the Public Security and General Intelligence departments, the governor of Amman, the King's adviser on tribal affairs, and the British ambassador in Amman.

Before the King left, Prince Mohammad was sworn in to serve as Regent.

Government denies giving 'concessions' in PLO accord

Agreement separates issues between sovereignty and identity — Anani

By Nermene Murad

Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The government yesterday sought to dismiss criticism that the accord it signed with the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) on Friday was a much watered-down version of the original agreement the two sides reached in October.

"Jordan did not make any concessions to the PLO in the economic cooperation accord.

What might appear as concessions in the document are simply a reflection of the political realities of the Middle East peace process," Information Minister Jawad Anani said Sunday.

Dr. Anani, one of Jordan's key economic planners in the Arab-Israeli peace negotiations, stressed that the signing of the accord had put an end to sensitivities over separating the Jordanian and Palestinian identities.

Jordanian critics of the accord have contended that the agreement failed to meet expectations for concrete cooperation and coordination between Jordan and the emerging Palestinian entity.

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(Continued on page 5)

PLO sees 3 weeks of talks, Israel two months

Combined agency dispatches

ISRAEL AND the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) prepared Sunday for talks aimed at lifting obstacles delaying an Israeli troop pull-out from occupied territories; with each side differing widely on how long an agreement will take.

The PLO said three weeks: Israel put it at two months.

The two planned informal discussions in the Egyptian resort of Tabu Sunday. On Monday they were formally to resume suspended talks to narrow gaps blocking implementation of the vaguely worded peace accord they signed in September.

Environment Minister Yossi Sarid, asked about PLO chief negotiator Nabil Shaath's estimate that an accord could be won in three weeks, said after a cabinet meeting:

"With this agenda, the problems that still must be solved and the obstacles that still must be lifted, it seems to me that one-and-a-half months are a more reasonable estimate."

Talks in Tabu late last year

founded over the same issues that blocked the pullout from starting as planned on Dec. 13.

These were who should control border crossings between self-rule areas and neighbouring Arab countries, and the extent of the Israeli withdrawal from the occupied Gaza Strip and the West Bank town of Jericho.

Dr. Shaath said Saturday that many issues, including a timetable for the withdrawal and the details of a Palestinian police force, were settled and needed only "a half hour" to be drafted.

But Dr. Shaath said time was needed to iron out outstanding differences on the main points of dispute.

Both sides had earlier expressed exasperation with the outcome of talks held in Cairo this month, that began with hopes of ending the logjam, and ended in dispute over whether the two sides had, as Israel claimed, reached agreement.

Dr. Shaath said there had been some progress "prior to the explosion" over the Cairo documents.

"I don't think anything came

(Continued on page 5)

GCC, Syria and Egypt open talks

King names new Jerusalem panel charged with deepening religious identity of Holy City

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein Sunday named a new Royal Commission for Jerusalem Affairs and entrusted it with the responsibility of "refuting hostile allegations, consolidating the facts (about Jerusalem), encouraging scientific research and providing counselling that reaffirms the Arab and Islamic characters of Jerusalem."

It is regrettable that Jerusalem is currently facing a critical turn in its history that caused its inhabitants to lose the feeling of security, stability and peace, and one that created an atmosphere of anxiety, and fear filled with distress and bitterness as a result of this difficult reality, the injustice, prevarications, trickery and conspiracy," King Hussein said in an opening statement.

"It's important for the Arabs to cooperate in an efficient manner, notably on the economic, commercial and investment fronts," Syrian Foreign Minister Farouk Al Sharaz said in an opening statement.

SANA quoted him as saying the meeting would examine practical means to implement the clauses of the Damascus declaration and difficulties that have prevented its implementation.

The ministers were also expected to discuss the Middle East peace process a week before Syrian President Hafez Al Assad and U.S. President Bill Clinton are to meet in Geneva in a bid to break the deadlocked Israeli-Syrian peace talks.

The Damascus declaration on political, security and economic cooperation was signed a month after the end of the Gulf war but never really took hold.

It called for the GCC states to provide Syria and Egypt with economic and financial aid in exchange for their participation in Gulf security plans.

At their summit in Riyadh last month, the GCC leaders said they wished to expand cooperation on all fronts with their two other partners.

He did not elaborate.

Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin warned Palestinians Saturday against renegeing on understandings reached in Cairo, saying Israel could do the same and further delay implementation of the autonomy accord.

Both sides had earlier expressed exasperation with the outcome of talks held in Cairo this month, that began with hopes of ending the logjam, and ended in dispute over whether the two sides had, as Israel claimed, reached agreement.

Dr. Shaath said there had been some progress "prior to the explosion" over the Cairo documents.

"I think that if this is the tendency, more obstacles will be placed in the path of reaching a written agreement on the implementation of the first stage of Gaza-Jericho first," Mr. Rabin added.

The GCC decided to set up a 10 billion fund to help finance development projects in Syria and Egypt but financial pledges for the fund from the oil producers have so far reached just over half the original target. No move was taken on military cooperation.

very critical situations fraught with mystery ... a city which is dear to our hearts," the King said.

"An Arab or Islamic cedar of the Holy City would be recorded with deep pain and deep regret in the annals of history," the King warned.

Referring to Jordan's support of the Palestinian cause and the Holy City of Jerusalem, the King stressed that "Jerusalem will remain Arab and Islamic in character as entrusted to the Hashemites, a city where the body of Al Hussein Ben Ali lies in rest and where the late King Abdullah Ben Al Hussein was martyred."

"We see Jerusalem close to us while others consider it far because to us the city is the symbol of peace, and we pledge to follow in the footsteps of our forefathers and true to their resolve in safeguarding the holy city," King Hussein said.

On the Royal Commission

Kabul is calm, but tension elsewhere

KABUL (Agencies) — A fragile ceasefire in the capital appeared to be holding Sunday as United Nations officials tried to broker a 48-hour extension to evacuate thousands of wounded.

Meanwhile, there was a tense standoff between rival factions in key northern towns and cities.

There was only sporadic gunfire in Kabul on Sunday morning, the second day of relative calm following six days of brutal fighting that left some 4,000 wounded and hundreds feared dead.

UN officials said they were trying to have the 24-hour ceasefire, set to expire Sunday, extended 48 hours to arrange the evacuation of wounded and to ferry emergency supplies into the devastated capital.

Except for tanks and armoured personnel carriers, the streets of the capital were deserted Sunday.

The United Nations was negotiating with the warring Afghan parties in the Pakistani capital of Islamabad, and had

(Continued on page 5)

Attacks in Aden, Sanaa jolt Yemen

ADEN, Yemen (AP) — A gunman raked the home of Yemen's vice president with machine gunfire Saturday in a new spate of attacks in Aden and Sanaa that have spotlighted the political turmoil in the country.

Security sources said no one was hurt in the shooting outside the home of Ali Salem Al Beedh. It followed an explosion outside the Justice Ministry in the capital, Sanaa, earlier Saturday and the assassination of a member of Mr. Beedh's party the night before.

The violence coincided with efforts to secure the release of eight men, including a Canadian and a Briton, who have been held since Monday by tribesmen seeking ransom them for concessions from the Sanaa government.

The turmoil further complicated efforts by the country's religious leaders to reconcile Mr. Beedh and President Ali Abdullah Saleh, whose row is threatening to undermine the 1990 union between the formerly Marxist South Yemen and the conservative North Yemen.

The security sources said a gunman suspected of firing at Mr. Beedh's home in the hilltop Aden district of Maasheeq was arrested. They refused to give his name or affiliation.

However, their account suggested more than one person might have been involved. They said the shooting came from a speeding military jeep, probably driven by an accomplice.

In the capital, Sanaa, other security sources said no damage or casualties resulted from the explosion outside the Justice Ministry.

Also insisting on anonymity, they disclosed that Abdul Karim Al Jahmi, identified as a member of Mr. Beedh's Yemen Socialist Party (YSP), was shot and killed as he drove towards the capital Friday night. The assailants fled, they said.

A YSP statement made available to Reuters said the

killing was yet another political assassination which "is pushing the country towards a destructive civil war" and was "a grave escalation of the political crisis."

In the mountainous Marib desert region, about 60 kilometres east of Sanaa, six Yemenis reportedly were refusing to accept freedom from their captors in solidarity with their Canadian and British colleagues, their boss said.

The eight captives, all working for a subsidiary of Hunt Oil Co. of Dallas, were seized Monday.

Diplomats and Hunt Oil Co. officials have identified the Briton as Peter Jackson, a pipeline manager for Yemen Hunt, and the Canadian as George Hawkins, 43, from Vancouver.

The tribesmen were demanding concessions from the government in return for a Hunt pipeline that runs through their area.

George Slaughter, general manager of the Yemen Hunt Oil Company, said the Yemenis "were free to go but they feel a sense of responsibility and they stay."

He added, however, that some had come and gone as intermediaries in negotiations between the tribesmen and Yemeni authorities.

The delegation had talks Saturday with Syrian Foreign Minister Farouk Al Shara'a.

The visit was agreed at a meeting between Syrian President Hafez Al Assad and U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher in Damascus last month, officials said.

The delegation is due to go on to Lebanon for further talks on the Israeli soldiers who went missing during Israel's invasion of Lebanon in 1982.

U.S. President Bill Clinton is due to meet Mr. Assad in Geneva on Jan. 16.

There are six missing Israeli servicemen in Lebanon. Only one of them, navigator Ron Arad, is believed to be alive.

Diplomats said U.S. Senator Richard Shelby, a Democrat from Alabama, also arrived in Damascus for talks on other issues related to bilateral relations and the Middle East peace process.

It is believed that Syria is trying to wrap up the issue of the Israelis before the Jan. 16 summit between Mr. Assad and President Clinton in Geneva as a gesture to help move forward the Middle East peace process.

"The U.S. administration is biased towards Israel and keeps supply it with all types of sophisticated weaponry in order to kill our people and destroy our towns and villages in South Lebanon and the Bekaa Valley," said Mr. Khalil, who is on a visit to Syria with Hizbullah Secretary-General Hussein Nasrallah.

Mr. Khalil said Sheikh Nasrallah was to meet with Syrian Vice President Abdul Halim Khaddam.

Mr. Khalil said the congressional delegation was "not qualified for playing any humanitarian role in this respect."

He said his party had conducted meetings with humanitarian organisations and "we are still prepared to discuss the question of captives in Lebanon with these organisations."

Damascus Radio said in a commentary Saturday that Mr. Clinton "will find out that President Assad is willing to push the peace process forward and achieve tangible results based on U.N. Security Council resolutions."

"Syria is eager for peace in as much as it is anxious to restore its own and Arab lands occupied by Israel," it said.

"Peace is parallel to justice which stipulates that Israeli occupation should be eliminated so as each party gets back its right."

Hizbollah rejects meeting with U.S. delegation

DAMASCUS (Agencies) — The Lebanon-based, Iranian-backed Hizbollah group has reiterated its refusal to meet with any U.S. intermediaries probing the fate of Israeli servicemen missing in Lebanon.

"We reject any meeting with any American official whether from the congress or from the administration to discuss this subject," Hussein Al Khalil, a spokesman for Hizbollah, told reporters.

A three-member U.S. congressional delegation arrived in Syria Friday to look into the fate of the Israelis who have been missing since Israel's 1982 invasion of Lebanon.

The delegation, which earlier visited Israel, was led by Michael van Dusen, chief of staff of the House of Representatives Foreign Affairs Committee.

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An Israeli soldier fires at Palestinian demonstrators in Gaza City's Palestine Square (AFP photo)

No equality before law in Israeli-occupied lands

By Colleen Siegel

Reuter

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM

Jewish settlers with automatic weapons block the road to Jerusalem from Hebron in the occupied West Bank to protest against the Israeli-Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) accord.

Palestinians on their way to work wait for hours for the angry settlers to end the demonstration. Israeli security forces make no attempt to remove the Israelis.

For Palestinians living under Israeli occupation for 26 years, the incident is just one of many in which a double standard of law is applied.

"Blocking roads ... I've had clients charged with that who have received 12 to 18 months in jail," said Palestinian lawyer Jonathan Kuttub, calling for Israeli legal authorities to handle settlers "a little more seriously."

There are signs the scales of justice could be tipping, but Israeli and Palestinian experts say the balance is still very much in the Israelis' favour.

Palestinians face a dizzying maze of Jordanian and military law and emergency regulations dating from the time of British rule 45 years ago. They are tried in military courts.

Israelis settlers are subject to Israeli law and tried in Israeli courts.

Recently the government has vowed to crack down on unruly settlers. Military com-

manders were told the army can detain Israeli citizens in the occupied lands and hand them over to police for possible criminal prosecution.

Yet despite the tougher line, Dedi Zucker, leftist head of the parliament's law committee, said a double standard in the territories is de facto.

"We're starting from a very low point. History shows us a very permissive, forgiving approach to most settler activities," he said.

That approach has held true even in murder investigations, says Joseph Alpher, head of the Jaffee Centre for Strategic Studies at Tel Aviv University.

"There clearly has been a double standard not only in applying the law but in the sentences that have been meted out," Mr. Alpher said.

He said Israel, which routinely sentences Palestinians convicted of killing Israelis to life terms in jail, would be paying special attention to how a Palestinian self-rule authority handles "security" offenders.

"If we object to their releasing on bail cut-throats and murderers... (they can say) you Israelis don't like that? here's a list of all the murderers you sent to jail for a year," Mr. Alpher said.

"We'll either have to call it a draw or we will have to start taking a stronger hand with our offenders," he said.

This month an Israeli court denied bail to a settler sus-

pected of involvement in unrest in which an Arab was shot dead. The judge felt it necessary to explain why.

"Every day we send people to jail who have thrown stones. We do that because of risk to human life. There is no doubt that someone who uses a gun and shoots it presents much more of a mortal danger," the judge was quoted as saying.

Mr. Alpher said bringing the full force of the law down on settlers was politically risky.

"Just as (Prime Minister Yitzhak) Rabin found it politically impossible to take down the settlements at this time so too I think it's politically impossible to come down hard on the settlers under present circumstances," he said.

Mr. Zucker, who allowed the renewal in parliament recently of the extension of Israel law to settlers in the occupied territories, said the unequal status quo would end with the implementation of the peace accord providing interim Palestinian self-rule.

Mr. Kuttub's vision of a solution is the end of Jewish settlement in the West Bank and Gaza Strip and the establishment of a Palestinian state.

"There is no place in the world where any group lives under a separate set of laws from the majority, except here... if the white minority in South Africa had to give up apartheid, I don't see any future for it here," he said.

Curfew in Gaza — a way of living

By Donna Abu Nasr
The Associated Press

GAZA CITY, Occupied Gaza Strip — Seven fashionably dressed Palestinian women sit giggling over a seaside dinner when suddenly one notices it's well past curfew. A chill descends on the group.

They've been too engaged in their reunion to notice all the tables around them emptying before the nightly deadline to get off the streets.

"I'm not leaving this place. I'm going to sleep on the table," says Malecha Abu Sitta, 70. "I'm too scared to go out."

Gazans consider the 8 p.m. to 4 a.m. curfew imposed six years ago a heavy burden, transforming the daily patterns of their lives. One of the strongest reasons many support the Israel-Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) autonomy accord signed in September is that it's supposed to put an end to the hated measure.

The army imposed the curfew just after the intifada, the Palestinian uprising that began in December 1987, to curb nighttime attacks. Some professionals, such as doctors, can get permits to be out after curfew.

But the average Palestinian is supposed to get home just after nightfall, prompting many to see the curfew as yet another excuse for Israelis to harass them.

"We don't believe the Israelis are under any threat at night," said Hafez Ashkar, a member of the PLO's Fatah faction. "The curfew is just part of Israel's strategy to oppress us."

The punishment for breaking the curfew is a fine, equal to a traffic ticket, which is a bit less than \$100. But that can be a lot in Gaza, where the average wage is about \$300 per month. Some violators are also detained for 48 hours or longer, depending on their status. A youth active in the intifada might be interrogated, for example.

Gazans had hoped that the curfew would be lifted Dec. 13, when the Israelis were supposed to begin withdrawing from the Strip under the autonomy accord.

But the delay in negotiations has evaporated those hopes.

After curfew, Gaza has the feel of a town waiting for a bomb to fall. Almost nothing moves.

Straight dogs roam the dark streets, occasionally illuminated by Israeli flares over the beach or the Palestinian refugee camps.

Evening basically starts at 3 p.m. in winter, about two hours before sunset. That's when weddings, birthday parties, visits and the rare theatrical play usually begin.

The strong influence of Islamic groups means liquor, banned under religious law, is hard to find. Only two restaurants stay open past 8 p.m. One is the U.N.-operated Beach Club; the other Al Salam restaurant.

Abu Haseira, the Palestinian owner of the Al Salam, plans to surprise Gazans with a Chinese restaurant, the first ethnic one in the city, and belly dancers in his fish restaurant once the curfew is lifted.

The curfew has inspired Gazan artists. Fayed Sirawi, 32, sketched a couple making love on their roof, fenced in by soldiers on the street below.

"The curfew has turned people into baby-making machines," he said. "People have only sex on their minds after curfew."

A study published by the Gaza Health Service Research Centre showed a gradual increase in birth rate from 27.35 in 1988 to 37.04 in 1992. The birth rate for 1992 was 50.4 per 1,000 women, one of the highest in the world.

There is some activity after curfew but it requires extreme caution.

Drivers go slowly, usually at 30 kilometres per hour, as fast cars make Israeli soldiers nervous. And drivers usually keep the inside light on in their cars.

"Going out after curfew can be a matter of life and death," says Mrs. Abu Sitta after fleeing from the fish dinner, her hands tightly clutched over her handbag as her eyes dart out the car window for signs of trouble.

Her 44-year-old daughter, Adala Abu Medein, on the other hand, was having the time of her life cruising the streets and honking her horn in her rare moment of curfew-busting.

"I'm intoxicated just from driving after curfew," she said. "I feel like a tourist exploring a new city. Tonight, I'm the queen of Gaza streets."

Ethiopian Somalis — far from home, nowhere to go

By Michael M. Phillips
The Associated Press

green leaves from the trees."

Now, his wife and their eight surviving children are crammed with 80 other refugees families in two rooms of the former Mogadishu polytechnic institution, all apparently doomed to be refugees for life.

The U.N. mission to Somalia has fed hundreds of thousands of people and restored enough security for many to return to their home villages. But those are native Somalis.

Ethiopian Somalis, including 50,000 in Mogadishu camps, are in a unique bind:

Those who want to return to Ethiopia have lost the legal refugee status that would force the United Nations to help them do so, and those who want to remain in Somalia have no villages to take refuge in.

"They find themselves in a really difficult situation," said Agnes Aszkenasy-Ononye, a displaced-persons specialist. "They're a lost group... the people you talk to have no clue what they want to do with their lives."

Hundreds of thousands of Ethiopian Somalis took refuge just inside the Somali border during the 1977 war

for control of the Ogaden region adjoining Somalia.

About 500,000 returned home in 1978-89 under an agreement reached by the Ethiopian and Somali governments and the U.N. High Commission for Refugees.

Those who remained, either because they feared going home or hoped for a better life in Somalia, were promised U.N. help getting established in Somalia.

Before that could be done, Mr. Siad Barre was overthrown and the struggle to replace him brought widespread fighting among Somali factions and clans. During

the current lull, aid agencies once again are trying to resolve



Parley to tackle social security issues

AMMAN (Petra) — Delegates from 12 Arab countries, including Jordan, will gather here Monday to take part in the seventh Arab conference on social security.

Social Security Corporation (SSC) Director Mohammad Saleh Al Hourani said that the meeting, to be held at the Amra Hotel under the chairmanship of Labour Minister Khalid Ghazawi, will discuss six main working papers dealing with ways to develop existing social security systems, concepts of social security in Islam and a pan-Arab strategy on social security, among other topics.

Attended by Mr. Baker Rasoul, director general of the Arab Labour Organisation (ALO), the meeting will also review social security experts in a number of countries and stimulate the roles of abusers, employers and governments in developing social security laws, according to Mr. Hourani.

An ALO general report covering surveys conducted in social security fields of the Arab World will also be reviewed at the three-day meeting, said Dr. Hourani.

The delegates, he added, include directors general of Arab institutions responsible for social security who would be exchanging ideas and expertise on social security-related fields.

The Jordanian delegation taking part in the meetings comprises representatives of the government, employers and workers.

According to Mr. Hourani, several Arab organisations are attending and nearly 100 participants will be present.



Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Talal Sataan Al Hassan Sunday confers with his Omani counterpart Yousef Abdullah Al Alawi at the Prime Ministry (Petra photo)

Oman, Jordan discuss economic, trade ties

AMMAN (Petra) — Omani Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Yousef Abdullah Al Alawi Sunday left Amman at the end of a two-day official visit to Jordan during which he met with His Majesty King Hussein and senior Jordanian officials.

In a departure statement, he said he relayed a verbal message from Sultan Qaboos Ibn Said of Oman on issues of mutual concern and current Arab issues.

Mr. Alawi also said that he listened to a briefing by King Hussein on various Arab issues, and Jordan's role in

support of the peace process. On his meeting with his Omani counterpart Talal Sataan Al Hassan, Mr. Alawi said he agreed with Mr. Al Hassan on the need to find a mechanism for coordination in various fields, including political aspects.

He pointed out that a joint committee was established to follow up on economic and commercial issues, and voiced hope that bilateral relations will be further enhanced, in implementation of wishes of both King Hussein and Sultan Qaboos.

Oman's efforts to achieve Arab reconciliation, he said, include his country's support of the good offices of the Arab League secretary general to achieve Arab solidarity.

Commenting on Mr. Alawi's visit to Jordan, Mr. Al Hassan, who held talks with him at the Foreign Ministry, said they discussed issues of common concern, developments of the Middle East peace process, and enhancing bilateral relations in the economic and commercial fields.

The minister was seen off at the airport by Mr. Al Hassan, senior ministry officials and Omani ambassador to Jordan.

Oman's efforts to achieve

towards lifting the embargo on both Iraq and Libya and to help the Somalis factions end their internal fight.

The conference lauded the efforts made by His Majesty King Hussein to contain the differences between Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh and his Vice-President Ali Salem Al Beedh, and called on the Yemeni leadership to overcome differences and protect the Yemeni unity. It also called on all national powers and organisations in Yemen to safeguard the Yemeni unity.

At the end of its meeting, the party decided to launch an appeal to the Arab and Islamic nations, calling on them to unite their ranks, patch up their differences and support the Palestinian struggle and the Palestinian uprising.

The party called on all Arab and Islamic countries to work

rich Dalkamouni, Mohammad Rawashdeh, Mohammad Al Azzam, Mousa Isheidat, Ibrahim Al Qa'oud, Sataan Al Hassan, Ahmad Al Jammal, Samir Okou and Yehya Hamouri.

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AMMAN (J.T.) — Al Yakathia (awakening) Party Saturday held its first general conference and reelected Abdul Raouf Al Rawabdeh as its secretary-general. It elected Subhi Rousan, Munther Shar'a, Habes Mahafza, and Abdul Salam Al Ghazwi as assistants to the secretary-general, according to a report in the Arabic daily Al Ra'i.

The party's general assembly also elected a 10-member Higher Committee, which groups Lamia Kubbah, Qad-

towards lifting the embargo on both Iraq and Libya and to help the Somalis factions end their internal fight.

The conference lauded the efforts made by His Majesty King Hussein to contain the differences between Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh and his Vice-President Ali Salem Al Beedh, and called on the Yemeni leadership to overcome differences and protect the Yemeni unity. It also called on all national powers and organisations in Yemen to safeguard the Yemeni unity.

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Opinion & Analysis

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An expensive deal

ON SATURDAY French Prime Minister Edouard Balladur arrived in Riyadh to discuss his country's economic ties with the oil rich kingdom and to "pave the way for billions of dollars in trade and defence contracts," as the French news agency put it in a dispatch from the Saudi capital. The same agency also reported that the British Defence Secretary, Malcolm Rifkind, was expected in Riyadh today to discuss the Tornado fighter planes deal that the British and Saudis signed last year.

The British, the French and the Americans are all worried about an expected drop in oil prices and the subsequent 20 per cent cut in this year's Saudi budget. The governments of those countries must have followed closely the meeting that the Saudi ambassador to Washington, Prince Bandar Ben Sultan, had just held with American arms manufacturers in which he tried to ally their fears over Saudi financial difficulties.

Riyadh's financial troubles, if they can be called that, are the result of three factors: the Gulf war, the big arms purchases and the drop in oil prices. But these factors are of the West's own making. Iraq — a major participant in that war — was originally armed and made to fight the "Iranian threat" for eight years. It was even believed that Iraq was "encouraged" to invade Kuwait. Then the Saudis and other Gulf countries that lost a brotherly ally in confronting the so-called Iranian threat were convinced that they could rely on the modern western arms technology to defend themselves. As for oil prices, U.S. President Ronald Reagan vowed in the 1980s to bring OPEC, the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries, to its knees; and that, he and his successors have managed to see through.

We are not, of course, blaming the West for wanting to "defend its way of life," as President Bush said at the beginning of the Gulf crisis in 1990. Business-minded people like Bill Clinton, Mr. Balladur and Mr. Rifkind have no qualms about Arabs selling their soul to the West. What those leaders are doing is satisfy their peoples' appetite for cheap energy and to keep their factories running to maintain unemployment down. These are two important factors that help politicians in the West win elections, whether they are liberals, democrats, socialists ...

Should the Saudis and the Gulf Arabs, who do not seem to be convinced of the Western intentions, continue to play in the hands of arms dealers who create conflicts and wars and perpetuate them for their own interests? Should they continue to think of their neighbours as their enemies and then go to the West for help?

It is not for us to answer such questions. Those who can may want to say where they stand on all of this.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

A COLUMNIST in Al Dustour daily Sunday said that the economic deal between the Palestinians and the Jordanians signed Friday is bound to serve as a bridge aimed at bolstering economic ties between the peoples on the two sides of the River. This bridge would not open the way for any Israeli hegemony over Jordanian affairs, but would rather pave the ground for Jordanian backing for the Palestinian Arab economy, said Tamer Al-Udwan. By opening Jordanian banks on the West Bank, the two sides show that they are determined to bolster their ties now at least on the economic level, realising that talk about confederation is premature and can be put off until liberation has been achieved, said the writer. The far objective of unity has started with little steps represented in the joint agreement concluded in Amman in the past week, but the two sides have started their practical steps towards achieving the aspired unity with the economic agreement, he continued. The writer said that by forming one market and exempting goods from either side from any customs tariffs the Jordanians and the Palestinians are actually paving the ground for unity between them. However, the two sides should be careful to contain any crisis, however small it could seem, in time and in a firm manner, leaving no room for any hostile rumours that could adversely affect bilateral relations, cautioned the writer. He said that the leaderships should realise that the masses feel that their relations rise above all kinds of crises as they struggle together to end Israel's occupation and attain their aspired unity.



M. KAHIL

Will U.N. leave Yugoslavia, and what would happen?

By Nicholas Doughty
Reuter

BRUSSELS — Frustrated by their impotence in the face of continued fighting in former Yugoslavia, major western nations seem prepared to pull their U.N. peacekeeping troops out this year — despite potentially dire consequences.

U.N. commanders, who are also aware of the huge costs of the operation, are becoming ever more bitter and critical.

France, Spain, Britain and Canada, the major troop contributors in Bosnia, are reviewing their commitments. International mediator Lord Owen says the forces may leave after the winter.

Analysts and diplomats say the warnings of recent days are a final attempt to put pressure on the warring Serbs; Croats and Muslims to reach a peace deal to end the 21-month-old war in Bosnia, where some 12,000 U.N. peacekeepers have been delivering aid.

But they also say the troops, perhaps including another 15,000 in Croatia, will almost certainly go home soon if peace efforts fail.

"It's not just an empty

threat. There is a very strong feeling in countries like France and Britain that there is not much point in keeping the troops there when they can't end the fighting," said Paul Beaver of Jane's Defence weekly.

A withdrawal, in turn, would almost certainly bring a renewed surge in fighting, more war crimes and ethnic cleansing.

It would also cause serious problems for Bosnia's beleaguered Muslims, who are more dependent than the Serbs or Croats on U.N. aid and protection.

"What is more, it would be a massive admission of failure by the United Nations," Mr. Beaver told Reuters.

"The U.N. would have lost faith and, in today's chaotic world, that is the last thing we need."

Another consequence would be a likely reduction in media coverage, something that has so far kept the world — and governments — aware of the horrors of the war.

U.N. forces have often served as protection for foreign media. Without them, and without the interest that fore-

ign troops lend to the story, Mr. Beaver and others say international attention to what happens in former Yugoslavia will fade away.

Despite these consequences, diplomats say many contributors to U.N. forces can simply no longer justify their commitment.

Mr. Owen and others have openly admitted that the delivery of relief supplies, while vital through the winter, has also served in part to fuel the conflict because the warring factions have taken some of the aid for their own troops.

Western governments say military intervention would be folly and the peacekeepers, while able to fire back if attacked, can do little if their path is blocked.

The risks are huge — mines and snipers have claimed the lives of several dozen peacekeepers — and the returns are increasingly hard to see. The strains are showing.

The commander of U.N. forces in Bosnia, Lieutenant-General Francis Briquemont, wants to leave his post early because of exhaustion.

The Belgian general has been an outspoken critic of

political efforts to end the fighting and the West, particularly NATO and the European Union, have lost credibility over their handling of the crisis.

But governments now seem to have lost patience with peace talks that produce nothing and a string of broken promises from the warring parties on ceasefires and aid deliveries.

There is also the question of financial cost.

With defence budgets shrinking rapidly, few countries can afford the billions of dollars it has cost to run such a complex military operation in difficult conditions.

The Toronto Globe and Mail newspaper reported on Tuesday that Canadian peacekeeping efforts in the former Yugoslavia, including more than 1,000 aid missions flown by Hercules planes into Sarajevo, have cost about \$750 million.

The problems of cost are far more acute for developing countries or Eastern European nations, such as Ukraine, Nepal, Egypt and Kenya, which all have troops in former Yugoslavia.

Germany passes judgment on unity 19 times this year

By Tom Heneghan
Reuter

BONN — Germany passes judgment this year on its reunification in 19 of the most unpredictable elections that this orderly country has ever seen.

Helmut Kohl, the Christian Democrat (CDU) chancellor who was reelected in 1990 soon after merging East and West Germany, could find himself turned out of office in October by voters fed up with his weak leadership since then.

That would still not be a situation like the Weimar Republic in 1930 or 1932. Roman Herzog, chief justice of the supreme court, remarked recently in comparing 1994 and the uncertainty preceding the Nazi third reich in 1933.

By the same token, the fresh-faced Social Democrat (SPD) challenger Rudolf Scharping could see his present lead in the opinion polls evaporate if an economic recovery later in the year helps voters forget their discontent.

Other potential factors that could buffet the body politic include resurgent Russian nationalism, a revival of reform communists in Eastern Germany or more neo-Nazi violence.

Voting for bodies as far removed as the European Parliament or as close as the local town council will be overshadowed by the economic problems that have emerged since unification, such as record unemployment and soaring state spending in the east.

"This is no year for political softies," warns Finance Minister Theo Waigel.

A diplomat with long experience in Germany observed: "This country is in a quite extraordinary state of anxiety. There is tremendous desire for change. But when people go into the booth, they may fall back on Adenauer's idea — no experiments," he said, referring to slogan of Chancellor Konrad Adenauer's successful 1957 reelection campaign.

Since 1990, frustrated voters have uprooted some of the traditional moorings of the

political system by abstaining in growing numbers or casting protest votes on the left and right.

The only thing most Germans would bet on now is that the polls will fracture the political landscape even more, forcing the two big parties — the CDU and the SPD — into a grand coalition to avoid forming a government with any fringe parties.

"That would still not be a situation in 1920, when the Weimar Republic in 1930 or 1932. Roman Herzog, chief justice of the supreme court, remarked recently in comparing 1994 and the uncertainty preceding the Nazi third reich in 1933.

Given so many variables, Bonn pundits have come up with all sorts of scenarios for 1994. The two most plausible are:

— Mr. Kohl heads a grand coalition: if his centre-right coalition loses its majority and the CDU remains Germany's largest party, Mr. Kohl would form a CDU-SPD coalition with the pragmatic Scharping as his deputy. Many in the CDU privately expect this to happen.

— Mr. Kohl heads a grand coalition: if the SPD overtakes the CDU, Mr. Kohl would bow out and CDU parliamentary leader Wolfgang Schaeuble or Saxony State Premier Kurt Biedenkopf might become deputy to Mr. Scharping. Mr. Scharping denies he is aiming for this but his strategy points this way.

Many in the SPD want to team up with the Greens or even form a "traffic light coalition" of the "red" SPD, the Greens and the FDP, whose colour in Germany's political rainbow is yellow.

A "red-green" alliance seems unlikely to win a majority while the "traffic light"

option, although mathematically possible, would create a hornet's nest of rival policies and politicians that Mr. Scharping would probably prefer to avoid.

The main dates to watch will be:

— March 13: the CDU risks starting the year with a stinging defeat in the Lower Saxony state poll. If SPD Premier Gerhard Schroeder keeps the CDU down to a third of the vote, CDU liberals could launch a "dump Kohl" drive. Almost nobody sees Mr. Kohl stepping down but he could be weakened by a controversy.

— May 23: the vote for a new president by a special assembly of federal and regional legislators could foreshadow a CDU-SPD grand coalition. Mr. Kohl's first choice, Steffen Heitmann, had to pull out after an uproar over his right-wing views. He has not yet named anyone to oppose popular SPD candidate Johannes Rau. Another mistake here could help shift power towards the SPD.

— June 12: the European Parliament poll is a key barometer of protest voting. A strong showing by the Republicans, who got 7.1 per cent in 1989, could mean they might enter the Bonn parliament in October and make a grand coalition unavoidable.

— Sept. 25: the CSU, sister party to Mr. Kohl's CDU and his coalition partner in Bonn, will try to defend its slim absolute majority in Bavaria and keep far-right votes down in single-digit levels. Failure on either count would be a bad omen for the chancellor so near to a national poll.

The government has yet to decide on which Sunday in October to hold the national election but most bets are on Oct. 23.

It is helpful to know that journalistic values are very powerful. Journalists try to underestimate the consequences of their reporting in order to be able to function and produce news! Conveying a sense of empathy allows

Media and public officials

By Izzat R. Dajani

IN THE process of liberalisation and democratisation in Jordan, the press is assuming a larger role in public life reflected by more unchecked reporting and less standard government rhetoric.

But as the media changed its direction and style, many, if not most, public officials did not! They were taken by surprise as they became more exposed to media reporting and their actions were constantly monitored. Their words and deeds are among the main ingredients for the media and hence accountability and responsiveness are attributed directly to this. Attitude, strategy, tactics and media practices are criteria a public official needs to consider and be familiar with. Dealing with the media and understanding it are among the main priorities a public official needs to consider, yet acquainted with and become confident about. There are elements of unease and uncertainty in the relationship between public officials and media people, with heightened tension as democracy matures in the country.

"The job of a public official is not just to make and implement policy, but to participate in a system of democratic governance in which public values are continuously rearticulated and recreated" Robert Reich, U.S. Secretary of Labour, wrote in his book *The Power of Public Ideas*.

One needs to understand what is the news story, the message. This is because journalism is not a first hand report of the raw material, but a report after material matured and/or events that took place. The press remains to be the chief means of contact with the unseen environment, in which "accuracy" has become the accepted form in relation to "truth." The function of news is to signalise an event. The function of truth is to bring to light hidden facts and set them in relation to one another. However, facts are distorted either by people providing them, by the process of selection or by the "lens" through which events are seen. Facts are further affected by censorship, limitations of social contact and distortion due to compression of events into short messages.

Each news organisation has its own history, policy, strategy, and culture that affect its contents and give it multiple entry points to the environment. It is also helpful to understand that every newspaper which reaches the reader is the result of a whole series of selections and censorship. As a noteworthy example, it is estimated that out of every seven words that reach the New York Times only one gets published. There remains the controversy of how effective the editors' selection of what gets printed or published is and how much this is influenced by bias and personal convictions.

News space is more readily available in a senior public official than to any other institution in the society. The press wants to play an active role in the policy-making process but expects to be treated as a neutral observer of it. The irony remains that while the press can presumably investigate virtually all the institutions in society, it refuses to appear on television, as it is always good practice and an opportunity to express one's ideas. Smiling is an excellent tactic in response to hard questions, and it also makes one appear friendly. Motion gets magnified on T.V. and is highly expressive. However, it is important to remain cool and appear confident — criteria not obviously mastered by Jordanian officials. There needs to be a coherence between the visual image, tone of voice, and message to be delivered. Looking at the camera, and hence the viewer, will add a stronger message to a "punish line," particularly that reporters for their "theatre" and their "drama" would try to divert one's attention away from the camera, in order to be able to edit and choose the particular shot they like best. It is also more natural to talk to the reporter than keep looking at the viewer. A pause can sometimes be an answer by itself. It is a provocative resource though and will allow the person to think more thoroughly about the question asked and its best possible answer. Staying with the message is important so as not to allow journalists to add to the agenda.

The medium is the message. It produces changes in people's perception of incidents. Absolute objectivity remains an impossibility and depends upon the reporters' professional reflexes, temperament and social and economic status. Not only events, but also individuals receive differential treatment in the news. It may be important for a public official to look at reporters as allies since their favourable treatment of information can aid one's policies. However, reporters can exploit their contacts in government to obtain exclusives, as much as officials exploit the need for news to deliver messages to key audiences.

It is helpful to know that opportunities hardly recur. When we deal with the media, we need to do things right the first time. We need to send our strongest possible message. We need to think of every opportunity as the only opportunity, presenting our ideas in the best possible manner by being firm but remaining friendly. It was Martin Linsky of Harvard University who once said: "Being friendly with the press is an advantage, being friends is an illusion."

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PLO sees 3 weeks of talks

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In Taba, negotiator Husain Asfour said: "We came back to Taba with the hope of ending the marathon negotiations on applying the Gaza-Jericho accord. We hope to do it in two weeks."

The PLO negotiating team led by Dr. Sauth arrived in Taba first and was awaiting the Israeli delegation headed by the deputy chief of staff, General Amnon Shahak.

An informal get-together was to be held later Sunday.

Israeli Housing Minister Benjamin Ben Eliezer said he hoped "the Palestinians will understand at the Taba talks that Israel has decided not to yield on security matters and wants progress toward applying the accord with the PLO."

Foreign Minister Shimon Peres said last week that a "long list" of problems remained to be resolved and that a quick signing of an agreement depended on the Palestinians.

Mr. Sarid meanwhile criticised Culture and Telecommunications Minister Shulamit Aloni for saying that the Netzarim settlement in the Gaza Strip should be dismantled.

"For now there is absolutely no question of dismantling or transferring Jewish settlements," he said.

Deputy Defence Minister Motte Gur also said Sunday that "current talks with the PLO will in no way affect security for Israeli settlers, including those at Netzarim, no matter how many troops Israel must maintain."

"All Israeli settlements will remain in place during the (five-year) interim period of Palestinian autonomy," he said.

Official Israeli sources said the coordinator of Israeli activities in the occupied territories, General Danny Rothschild, presented the cabinet with a bleak picture of the occupied territories.

Pledges of financial aid from

around the world have had little effect on the territories' economy and Palestinian support for the autonomy accord was slipping away as unemployment and poverty increased.

A right-wing Israeli opposition parliamentarian said Saturday that the army is preparing to leave Gaza City next month under autonomy arrangements.

The operation codenamed "Rainbow Colours" will start Feb. 11 and take one month and two days, Eliezer Zaiberg of the ultra-nationalist Tzomet Party said. "It's not just a draft. Explicit orders have been sent already."

An Israeli military source denied that such a date had been set but told AFP the army "had prepared redeployment plans for the Gaza

Strip."

He said the plans were to be implemented only if Israel and the PLO reached an agreement, adding that several issues had yet to be discussed.

Housing Minister Ben Eliezer meanwhile reviewed a road plan for the West Bank and Gaza that will allow Jewish settlers to circumvent areas of Palestinian autonomy, Israel Television said.

Mr. Ben-Eliezer was confirming Friday's TV report that at the cost of two billion shekels (\$666 million), Israel plans to pave 650 kilometres of new roads to minimise friction between Jewish settlers and the Palestinians, the report said.

"The defence ministry needs to approve the plan and set priorities, according to the television.

Calm in Kabul, tension elsewhere

(Continued from page 1)

moved its remaining international personnel, from Kabul to Pakistan.

On Sunday, a team travelled to Jalalabad, about 120 kilometres east of Kabul, to try to gauge the needs of tens of thousands of residents who fled the capital during the lull in fighting.

Many of the refugees huddling along roadsides against the bitter cold, having fled Kabul with whatever they could carry.

"It is true that an extension to the temporary ceasefire has been agreed until this evening," presidential spokesman Abdul Aziz Murad said. "It was agreed at the request of Pakistan and Iran."

Pakistan's charge d'affaires in Kabul, Tariq Azizuddin, said his government had called for an extension of the ceasefire through the Afghan ambassador in Islamabad hoping the time could be used to find a negotiated end to the factional fighting.

"We are extremely happy to

note that the response has been positive from both sides," he said.

But Mr. Murad ruled out a permanent ceasefire with former communist northern warlord General Abdul Rashid Dostum, who launched a grab at power at dawn on New Year's Day with a blistering bombardment of Kabul.

However, Mr. Murad said there could be a permanent ceasefire with Prime Minister Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, Mr. Rabban's arch-rival now in an alliance with Gen. Dostum.

No comment was immediately available from Gen. Dostum and Mr. Hekmatyar.

Sources in Mr. Hekmatyar's Hezb-e-Islami party said in the northwestern Pakistani town of Peshawar that Mr. Dostum's jets bombed the government's Bagram airbase, north of Kabul, on Sunday morning.

Pakistani and Iranian embassies are among five foreign missions still operating in Kabul after the evacuation of several diplomats during Saturday's ceasefire.

Government denies 'concessions'

(Continued from page 1)

monetary and financial committee will be set up to cooperate in both countries in order to agree on financial, monetary and banking policies during the Palestinian interim period, and until the central Palestinian monetary authority is established."

The accord continues that the "two sides also agree to cooperate in order to maintain the value of the Jordanian dinar and exchange rates and manner of dealing with these currencies."

"This stipulation guarantees that policies that will hurt or adversely affect our monetary policies or currency will not be agreed upon," Dr. Anani said.

He also said that the accord was specific in allowing the use of "Arab and international currencies" which precludes the use of the Israeli shekel which is neither Arab nor international.

But he said Jordan understood that it could not insist on the use of the Jordanian dinar as the only currency in circulation when "the Egyptian pound is being used in the Gaza Strip. Any country in the world deals with international currencies in trading."

But it is issues like this one, and the more pressing issue of Palestinian refugees with Jordanian or Egyptian travel documents, which has made Jordan accept the formation of a four-member committee that would include Jordan, the PLO, Egypt and Israel to discuss issues interlinked among the four countries, according to the minister.

Although the four-member committee has yet to be formed, Dr. Anani said, it had become apparent that the four parties have to coordinate on monetary as well as refugee issues.

Dr. Fanek's argument that the accord only called for the "establishment of a committee to encourage trade exchange" rather than specifically calling for "a unified market as the public was told," was also refuted by Dr. Anani's explanation of working within the "realm of what is possible."

"What we aimed for is to put in place an economic accord that would set the principles of coordination between Jordan and Palestine that would take into account whether it can be implemented or not," Dr. Anani said.

He explained that some stipulations of the accord, such as the one on opening banks branches in the territories, "could be implemented im-

mediately and that is why we are moving on it."

He said that in other sectors, such as trade, there were problems on the ground that were directly tied to Israeli occupation and the delay in the transfer of authority.

"Trade from the West Bank to Jordan is now in place, but trade in the opposite direction is facing problems as a result of the Israeli occupation," Dr. Anani explained.

"What the accord did was to set the principles that Jordanians and Palestinians agree on but that cannot be implemented until the negotiations with Israel are concluded," Dr. Anani said.

"Some things can be implemented now and other things can only be implemented later but we have set the general arrangements for them in this accord," he explained.

Dr. Anani also pointed out that because of the multifaceted intricacies of the Jordan-PLO accord, Jordan realises that at one point "there will be a need for the three to sit together," — Jordan, PLO and Israel. He said he did not know when this need would be translated into practical steps but that the issues on the table indicate that "the issues before us may require sitting down and discussing them together."

Sultan Hattab, a columnist for Al Ra'i newspaper who is close to the Majali government, wrote Sunday that the agreement "boosts Jordan's political credibility, strengthens the value of the dinar and opens the doors for future cooperation." Mr. Hattab said the government and the prime minister were keen on reaching the agreement and had carefully chosen the team that negotiated with the Palestinians.

He said that the agreement should serve as a model for other Arab countries to emulate since agreement among Arabs helps the Palestinian negotiators.

Mr. Hattab said that after the King's speech earlier this month Jordanian and Palestinian politicians, thinkers, parliamentarians, bankers and business leaders started urgent consultations that helped lead to the agreement.

He said that Jordanian and Palestinian negotiators had "dealt a blow to the economic annex to the Palestinian-Israeli declaration of principles" and replaced it with a Jordanian-Palestinian agreement.

King names new panel

(Continued from page 1)

solution to the problem of Jerusalem and the holy site and thus abort hostile designs aimed at stealing the city from the Arab and Muslim peoples' hands," the King said.

King Hussein made it clear in his message that Jordan seeks no profits or influence "but it seeks peace and right and justice and the attainment of the higher national interests."

"We see in the city of Jerusalem a focal point for unifying Arab and Muslim people's efforts, drawing them nearer to one another because we believe that this city should not be one for differences among them," he said.

He said: "The re-formation of the Royal Commission for Jerusalem Affairs should serve as one of the important guarantees needed for this lack and to shoulder the heavy responsibilities entrusted to it under the present critical circumstances. It should be backed materially and provided with all means enabling it to pursue its studies and research work in historic legal and Islamic fields related to Al Quds Al Sharif."

Furthermore, he said, the commission should concert its efforts with those of universities and other research centres in Jordan and abroad and "must build bridges of cooperation with them and should highlight the Jordanian Hashemites' distinguished and pioneering role in spearheading efforts to preserve the Arab and Islamic character of Jerusalem with all its Islamic and Christian sites."

The King named the following members of the commission, which he said would be chaired by His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan:

Abdul Rahman Suareddahab, Ahmad Al Ibrahim, Ahmad Al Khalili, Mohammad Al Salami, Mohammad Othmani, Fadel Hussein Al Jilani, Ismail Akwaa, Abdul Aziz Al Douri, (all from Arab and Islamic countries), the minister of information, the chief justice, the minister of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs, the minister of state for foreign affairs, Dr. Hazem Nuseibeh Abdullah Salah, Jamal Nasser, Kamel Abu Jaber, Nasreddin Al Assad, Bishop Salem Al Sayegh, Bishop Samir Qafeeti, Mohammad Adnan Bakheit, Fr. Costantine Karman, and Awn Khasawneh.

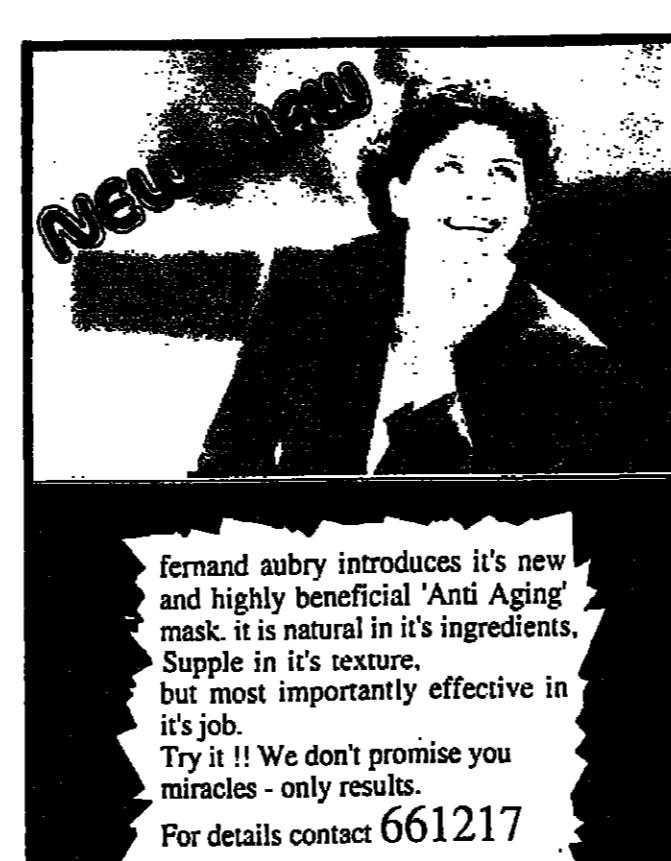
In his letter, the King wished the new commission success in handling its duties, pledging that he would provide the commission with all the material support and expertise it might need for its work.

In a separate letter addressed to Akram Zueiter, the former head of the commission, King Hussein voiced deep appreciation of the outgoing commission's services.

"You have spent many years as chairman of the commission and pursued with dedication and diligence the heavy duties required and the task entrusted to the commission," King Hussein said.

"As you have lately been suffering from ill-health which prevents you from pursuing the march, I have decided to form a new commission grouping an elite of scholars to shoulder this responsibility to work under the chairmanship of the Crown Prince," King Hussein said.

King Hussein thanked the former commission members for their dedicated efforts and their achievements over the past years.



High Commissioner for Human Rights — a milestone for the cause of human rights

By Waled Sadi

THE DECISION of the United Nations General Assembly during its last session to create the post of High Commissioner for Human Rights was a bit of a surprise given the fact that the Vienna world conference on human rights that was held during last summer turned a thumb down on the idea. When the Vienna conference decided to relegate responsibility on the proposal to the U.N. General Assembly, the clear signal was that the world was not about to accept this old-new concept.

The compromise idea to postpone action on the suggestion till the General Assembly itself has an opportunity to express itself on it had as the underlining motivation to soften the blow of rejection rather than anything else. In retrospect, the endorsement of the proposal to establish a post of High Commissioner for Human Rights was astonishing, to say the least.

Something must have happened between last June and December to have influenced the international community to effectively change its mind altogether on a concept that may be rightly construed as a milestone for the human rights cause.

What the majority of the international community feared most about upgrading the U.N. involvement in human rights endeavours was that such a step would mean greater interferences with their respective domestic affairs, a very hot issue on

which the world was usually divided.

On the surface, therefore, the two sides may have scored a point, but in the final analysis the western conception may have scored more.

What really matters at the end is how this new high commissioner is going to carry out his or her functions in the future. The post of high commissioner is bound to consolidate itself as the years go by and there is every prospect that the eventual high commissioner will be able to muster enough strength to highlight more than ever the international interferences in human rights subjects across the world.

"By accepting to let the world body itself chose the high commissioner rather than the Security Council for example, the developed countries may have won a temporary fight. As long as the prospective high commissioner comes from the developed states, the majority of the developing countries may feel satisfied and vindicated. The problem may develop elsewhere, however, since the West has been able to find an African or Asian or Latin American to lead the U.N. human rights function who is very close to their human rights perspective."

Since the existing binding international treaties or conventions of human rights will be the basis for executing the mandate of the new post, there is no way that the developing countries can succeed in curbing his or her powers to improve human rights anywhere in the world. Yet, this development was expected. When subjects such as refugees have a high commissioner to carry out the work load on their behalf, it would seem sensible to let human rights causes also enjoy the benefit of a very high international figure to pursue them.

We, in Jordan, have nothing to fear from the creation of the new post. In fact, the Jordanian delegation to the Vienna world conference on human rights, headed by His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, did not reject the idea per se. We called them for accountability by the General Assembly of the U.N. we got this much.

As far back as the seventies, Jordan was among the early sponsors of the proposal as long as it was to be adopted on sensible grounds. This appears to have been accomplished for the moment. Yet, only the future would tell how reasonable these grounds are. This is where we have to maintain vigilance.

Human Rights File

The developing countries of the world, which comprise the greater majority of the comity of nations, have upheld a different perspective on the link between economic rights on the one hand and political and civil rights on the other. Having sensed that the western perspective of the universality of human rights was gaining the upper hand in the human rights game between the haves and the have-nots, the poorer nations of the world sought to shelf the idea of greater international involvement in human rights causes altogether for as long as possible. This became clear when the developed nations yielded on the organic link between economic human rights and political rights but refused to compromise on the universality of human rights, irrespective of the so-called special particularities of different cultures in the world.

Where the West may have compromised was over the link between the post of High Commissioner and the General Assembly where the developing world is heavily represented.

By accepting to let the world body itself chose the high commissioner rather than the Security Council for example,

the developed countries may have won a temporary fight. As long as the prospective high commissioner comes from the developed states, the majority of the developing countries may feel satisfied and vindicated. The problem may develop elsewhere, however, since the West has been able to find an African or Asian or Latin American to lead the U.N. human rights function who is very close to their human rights perspective."

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Economy

JORDAN TIMES, MONDAY, JANUARY 10, 1994

South Asian economies seen gathering pace in '94

BOMBAY (R) — South Asia's economies, stimulated by a series of region-wide reforms that have unshackled business and liberalised currency regulations, will gather pace in 1994, posting growth averaging above five per cent, analysts said.

"With the winds of liberalisation sweeping the sub-continent, the economies of Pakistan, India, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh are on an upswing despite being burdened with one of the highest rates of poverty in the world."

While still lagging behind the more dynamic economies of East Asia, the South Asian region of 1.2 billion people represents one of the world's biggest consumer markets.

India is opening up as one of the world's major customers for power companies, infra-

structure builders, aircraft and telecommunications.

Pakistan has privatised many state industries, and despite a Tamil separatist revolt Sri Lanka is attracting renewed investment.

Across the sub-continent, governments have adopted a series of market-oriented reforms to reduce protectionism, unshackle industry and trade, and ease currency restrictions.

Even Bangladesh, once regarded as hopelessly aid-dependent, has made its currency convertible on current account.

While still plagued by widespread corruption and red tape, entrepreneurs now have fewer hurdles to cross. Stock markets throughout the region, spurred on by strong foreign investor interest, have posted sharp gains.

The U.N. Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) says the Indian sub-continent grew by an estimated 4.9 per cent in 1993 with India, boosted by 20 per cent export growth, expected to achieve 5.2 per cent expansion.

"Policies aimed at stabilisation and structural adjustment should allow the economies of both Bangladesh and Pakistan to grow by more than five per cent in 1994," the Bangkok-based agency said in its annual forecast.

Governments throughout the region are concerned about a revival of inflation and continued high interest rates, which often are above 15 per cent.

Improved political stability and lower global oil prices are

helping local economies. But despite growing industrialisation and growth in trade, much still depends on the weather and the annual monsoon rains.

After four good monsoons, India's economy is forecast to grow by 4.5 per cent in the current year ending March and more than 5.0 per cent in the following year.

The Pakistan government forecasts that real growth in gross domestic product (GDP) will rise by 5.6 per cent in fiscal 1993/94 (July/June), lower than the targeted 7.5 per cent because of damage to the cotton and wheat crops, but well up on last year's record low 3.0 per cent.

Economists say Pakistan has transformed its economy into one of the most open in the region, but argue a few areas

could still merit changes.

"Tariff reforms are vital," said economist Hafeez Pasha, who as commerce minister in the previous, caretaker government introduced an ambitious package to reduce tariffs to a maximum of 50 per cent from the current 92 per cent over the next three years.

India's Finance Minister Manmohan Singh is also expected to give a new impetus to the country's reforms in a national budget to be presented in mid-February.

But Janata Party leader and former commerce minister Subramanian Swamy said he is not going fast enough.

"What we need is radical steps like opening of free ports, cutting taxes and listing of 70 per cent of the shares of all public sector directly in the

stock market," he said.

Bangladesh's GDP grew by 4.3 per cent in 1992/93 (July/June) compared with 4.2 per cent the previous year, and is expected to post faster growth in the current year because of a favourable trade balance, according to the central bank.

Sri Lanka, which has long had a more open economy than the rest of South Asia, is projected to post six per cent growth in 1994 against 5.6 per cent last year, according to central bank governor H. B. Dissanayake.

The only problem has been defence spending to contain a Tamil separatist revolt. The spending has been as high as 4.5 per cent of GDP. "If not for the war, we could grow by 10 per cent a year," one senior government economist said.

nearly 20 per cent to \$42.7 billion.

Oman also cut spending to \$5.3 billion from \$5.5 billion while other GCC members have yet to release their 1994 budgets.

Except for Saudi Arabia, the share indices in the six-nation Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) hit a record level in 1993 and market capitalisation of trading institutions in some members soared by more than 20 per cent.

The 1,000-point share index in the UAE, which has the second largest stock market, jumped by around 22 per cent to 2,025.36 on Jan. 1, from 1,650.25 on the first day of 1993.

The market capitalisation of its 60 banks and companies increased by 25 per cent to \$10.3 billion from \$8.2 billion, over the same period.

In Oman, the share index rose only slightly to 113.71 from 113.01, but turnover jumped by 66 per cent to \$182 million from \$109.2 million. Bahrain's index soared by 418.8 points to 1,928.31.

Kuwait's market, once the busiest in the Middle East, is still recovering from the 1990 Iraqi invasion. Dealing in Qatar has remained negligible as there is no stock exchange and the number of trading institutions is limited.

In Saudi Arabia, the share index lost 9.54 points to reach 188.87 points on Dec. 30 after steadily rises in the past few years.

Turnover, however, registered a record \$4.65 billion in 1993, compared to \$3.6 billion in 1992 and \$2.26 billion in 1991.

"The decline in the Saudi share index has nothing to do with the fall in oil prices," said Ziad Dabbas, share dealing director at the National Bank of Abu Dhabi.

Arab Gulf stock markets shrug off oil price decline

ABU DHABI (AFP) — A sharp decline in oil prices is forcing Arab Gulf states to slash spending but it has had no impact on their burgeoning stock markets, dealers have said.

Except for Saudi Arabia, the share indices in the six-nation Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) hit a record level in 1993 and market capitalisation of trading institutions in some members soared by more than 20 per cent.

The oil price fall has had no effect on the stock markets because most trading institutions still expected to make higher profits and their share yield has remained more profitable than other investment fields," said Zuhair Kawasani, a leading United Arab Emirates (UAE) stockbroker.

"But the markets could be affected if governments are forced to sharply cut development projects due to the decline in oil prices because state spending is still the main element in economic activity in the region."

Oil prices have remained more than \$6 per barrel below OPEC's target of \$21 due to oversupply and other factors.

GCC states — Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Qatar, Oman, Kuwait and the UAE — are the worst hit by oil market instability given their heavy reliance on crude exports, which account for more than 80 per cent of their total exports.

The oil price drop has forced Saudi Arabia, the world's top crude exporter and producer, to slash its 1994 budget by

Japan's vehicle sales dip to six-year low

TOKYO (AFP) — Motor vehicle sales in Japan dipped for the third consecutive year in 1993 to a six-year low point of 4,887,179 units, reflecting the prolonged recession, an industry report has said.

The 1993 figure, which was down by 8.4 per cent from the figure in 1992, was the lowest annual total since 1987 when sales came to 4,344,000 units, the Japan Automobile Dealers Association said in the report.

Sales of imported vehicles grew 9.1 per cent to 201,484 units, the report said.

In December alone, motor vehicle sales dropped 11.1 per cent from a year earlier to 54,715 units for the ninth straight year-on-year decline, the association said.

The statistics exclude sales of mini-cars with an engine displacement of 660 cc or less. It was the first time in five years that the annual total dipped below five million but the report foresees that 1994 sales would manage to reach about five million "despite a tough situation prevailing January

through March."

The association hoped that car users would finally decide to buy new models and that an expected cut in income taxes would spur automobile sales.

By category, 1993 sales of passenger cars dropped 6.9 per cent from 1992 to 3,427,088 units. Of them, cars with an engine displacement of more than 2,000 cc accounted for 683,763 units, down 4.2 per cent from the year earlier, and smaller cars 2,743,325 units, down 7.5 per cent.

Sales of trucks were down 11.7 per cent to 1,441,066 units and those of buses down by 11.8 per cent to 19,025.

By maker, Toyota's sales dropped by 7.7 per cent to 2,057,813 units for a 42.1 per cent share of the 1993 total sales.

Nissan followed with 1,098,481 units, down by 8.4 per cent from 1992, for a share of 22.5 per cent. Mitsubishi was third with 458,685 units, down by 7.2 per cent, and Honda fourth with 344,126 units, down by 14.9 per cent.

World Bank spending criticised despite cuts in first class travel

WASHINGTON (AP) — The World Bank expects to save \$7 million in 1994 by allowing only President Lewis Preston to fly first class, but a U.S. senator who has made himself the bank's godfather says its spending is still too high.

"If the bank required all its employees to travel economy class, it would save \$30 million a year," said Senator Hank Brown, a member of the Foreign Relations Committee, in a statement.

The bank is owned by 177 countries, with the U.S. government holding the largest block of shares. The bank lends nearly \$25 billion a year, the biggest source of aid to developing countries.

It made a profit of \$1.1 billion in the year that ended last June 30 after spending \$1.4 billion on its own costs of operation.

Senator Claiborne Pell, chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, Mr. Brown, and other senators have com-

plained about administrative costs at the bank and its sister organisation in Washington, the International Monetary Fund.

Along with the new travel rules allowing only business class seats on long trips, the bank is also banning stays at its staff at 57 of the world's most expensive hotels, including the Ritz in Paris, the Savoy in London, the Richemond in Geneva, the Mandarin in Hong Kong and the Ana in Tokyo.

Senator Brown had a list of other complaints about the bank.

The bank needs an independent inspector general to root out "waste, fraud, abuse and mismanagement."

— Tax-free World Bank salaries average \$123,000 a year. Mr. Cullen replied that the overhead, the bank still makes money. The big increase was due in part to the opening of relations with countries of eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, which required big expenditures for travel and new offices. The increase will be smaller in future years.

Mr. Cullen replied that the land for the new headquarters already belongs to the bank. Owning is cheaper than renting, even with the cost overruns. The buildings are standard American office buildings, fairly austere and from a year.

Starting pay at the bank is \$16,350 a year and Mr. Preston gets \$165,910 — considerably less than his former salary as a top executive at J.P. Morgan, he said.

But among U.S. commercial banks, World Bank pay is considered good, especially for economists, said John Haseltine of the Institute of International Finance. His organisation groups major international banks.

Mr. Brown also said the bank is building a "Taj Mahal" of new headquarters. Costs are running nearly 50 per cent over estimates, while there is plenty of vacant office space in Washington. He also said the bank's annual overhead of \$1.4 billion increased 11 per cent in

gains in fixed investment, and renewed foreign buying of equities and gilt-edged securities.

A broad, they included an end to major remaining sanctions by the United Nations and investors' uncertainties, violence, broke out of a five-year decline to post estimated growth of one per cent in 1993.

Economists see this doubling in 1994, but warn that recovery will be slow and fragile during and beyond the transition to the country's first all-race elections on April 27.

He described as "doubly disappointing," however, an accelerated flight of short term capital last year, which official figures show totalled 9.4 billion rand (\$3.0 billion) in the first nine months.

Europe enters new era as EMI goes into operation

FRANKFURT (R) — Europe offers a new financial era this week with the inaugural meeting of the European Monetary Institute (EMI), the forerunner of a future European central bank.

EMI President Alexandre Lamfalussy will chair the EMI's first meeting in Frankfurt, the controversial site chosen for the new agency and the future central bank after a long and bitter contest between London and Germany's financial capital.

But subsequent meetings are expected to be held in Basle, Switzerland until the EMI finds permanent accommodation in Frankfurt. That could take until the second half of

this year.

At Tuesday's meeting, the EMU council, made up of Mr. Lamfalussy and the governors of the European Union central banks, will choose a deputy to the president from among the ranks of the central bank chieftains.

One European monetary official said the meeting would otherwise be a "symbolic show of support for the EMI's new location in Frankfurt."

At a news conference after the meeting, Mr. Lamfalussy, a respected Belgian monetary expert, is, however, expected to map out his agenda for the EMI.

The creation of the EMI coincides with the start of cer-

tain stages of European economic and monetary union (EMU), during which E.U. nations will strive for greater coordination of policies before the final creation of a single currency.

The inauguration also comes only five months after the virtual collapse of the European monetary system, which was all but blown apart by speculators last summer.

It will be up to Mr. Lamfalussy to help restore the credibility of the system. He also has the delicate task of fostering coordination of monetary policies while not allowing the EMI to encroach on the independence of the individual central banks.

The Americans began thereafter to pull themselves out of the Great Depression and started one of the greatest series of increases in real wealth per capita that this world has seen," he added.

Mr. Keys listed 23 key areas of improvement over the past year in the economy. At home these included bringing the budget under control, falling inflation, interest rate cuts,

"We have this opportunity too," he said in a message to the prominent local magazine Finance Week.

The economy, sapped by sanctions, political and investors' uncertainties, violence, broke out of a five-year decline to post estimated growth of one per cent in 1993.

Economists see this doubling in 1994, but warn that recovery will be slow and fragile during and beyond the transition to the country's first all-race elections on April 27.

He described as "doubly disappointing," however, an accelerated flight of short term capital last year, which official figures show totalled 9.4 billion rand (\$3.0 billion) in the first nine months.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Private worries can only be eliminated by doing something constructive about them quickly. Be sure tonight you take health treatments you need and get wardrobe in good order.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) The ideal day to perfect hobbies with relatives, friends, youngsters, et al. However, don't be stubborn or expect others to be better than they are.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Every chance is yours now to become friendly with persons whose background and ideas are similar to your, this will allow you to obtain success.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Impress upon business associates that you family life means a great deal to you and it is impossible to devote yourself exclusively to business.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) A fine day and night to raise your level of consciousness so that you make more headway in whatever happens to be your special talents.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) While you love to help others and be truly magnanimous, this is one of those days when you must firmly decide to help yourself, increase income and leisure so that you can truly be humanitarian.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Take time to reach a far better understanding with associates or fellow workers so that the future is more successful and harmonious.

THE Daily Crossword by Bernice Gordon



Turkey to curb imports to cut current account gap

ANKARA (R) — Turkey, grappling with a record trade and current account deficits, will act soon to tighten supervision of imports, treasury officials have said.

"We have prepared two decrees. They will be put into effect soon," said one official, who declined to be named.

He said Turkey would monitor imports from individual countries and warn them when their exports harmed Turkish producers or when bilateral trade swung sharply against Ankara.

"Under the new system, we may call specific countries for negotiations to correct trade imbalances and ask for a cut in their exports to Turkey," another treasury official said.

The decrees envisage a monitoring system, which would include an inspection council and a requirement for state organisations to obtain prior permits for imports.

Officials said Turkey would also demand that imported goods meet recognised international standards. Local producers are worried about cheap, low-quality goods flooding their market.

Last month Turkey cut customs taxes and levies on imports of about 16,000 items from European Union (E.U.) and European Free Trade Area (EFTA) members as part of its transition to a customs union with the 12-member E.U. in 1995.

Turkey has pledged to re-

Saudis offer 14 projects in industrialisation drive

ABU DHABI (Agencies) — Saudi Arabia has invited investors from its wealthy Gulf neighbours to examine 14 new projects worth nearly \$500 million as part of an industrialisation drive to lessen reliance on unstable oil earnings, the regional press has reported.

The kingdom will present the 14 projects at a seminar in Jeddah Tuesday and their costs are estimated at 1.8 billion Saudi riyals (\$480 million). They cover petrochemicals, chemicals, metals, plastic and paper.

They will provide 806 jobs and their investment yield ranges between 20 and 37 per cent, the papers said.

The projects are part of Saudi Arabia's campaign to expand its industrial sector and reduce dependence on oil, which provides the bulk of its income.

More than two-thirds of Saudi imports from GCC states came from the UAE.

UAE urged to introduce five-year development plan

ABU DHABI (AFP) — The United Arab Emirates (UAE) should introduce a five-year plan to improve domestic development and tackle annual budget problems, the official news agency WAM has said.

Other Gulf states have launched an industrialisation drive given their limited farming and tourism potentials. But industries have remained confined to such light products as chemicals, cement, aluminum, paper, and clothes.

Meanwhile, the value of Saudi Arabia's imports from other Gulf Arab states shot up 12.6 per cent to 2.9 billion Saudi riyals (\$773 million) in the first half of 1993, a UAE-based newspaper has said.

"The present economic, political and social circumstances are right for releasing the federal budget in time and mapping out the first five-year development plan that could be implemented at the start of 1995," it said.

"This will contribute to a timely release of the budget, ensure financing for all economic activities and achieve

further progress and prosperity that will enable the UAE to enter the next century with firm steps," it added.

The UAE charted its first five-year development plan in 1980 but it was shelved due to sharp fluctuations in oil prices.

Economic growth depends heavily on government spending given the relatively small contribution by the private sector. But delays in the release of the annual budget have hurt development by holding up some projects.

Official sources said the delays were because some federal ministries present their draft budget late while others demand higher allocations.

But they noted an improvement in this situation, with the budget being released in the first quarter in the past three years instead of the year end.

"This is because the finance ministry has warned them it will itself assess their budgets if they exceed the deadline," one source said.

UAE minister of state for financial and industrial affairs Ahmad Al Tayer said last week the federal budget would be issued in the next two weeks after all ministries had submitted their draft budgets.

But he admitted some of them had again demanded more allocations despite a sharp decline in oil prices. He said this pushed up the draft 1994 budget to around 20 billion dirhams (\$5.44 billion).

"The ministry had to return those budgets to the ministries for revision," he said, adding the budget was revised down to its 1993 level of 17.6 billion

dirhams (\$4.79 billion).

In theory, the UAE federal budget is financed by half of the income of each of the country's seven emirates but in practice all the funds come from the oil-producing members Abu Dhabi and Dubai.

Like other Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states, the UAE has sharply cut spending over the past decade to tackle a budget deficit caused by the oil price fall. But the shortfall has persisted in all member states which fear further spending reductions could harm development.

Oman is the only GCC country to enforce a five-year development plan, based mainly on oil revenues. The other members Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain and Qatar depend on annual budget allocations.

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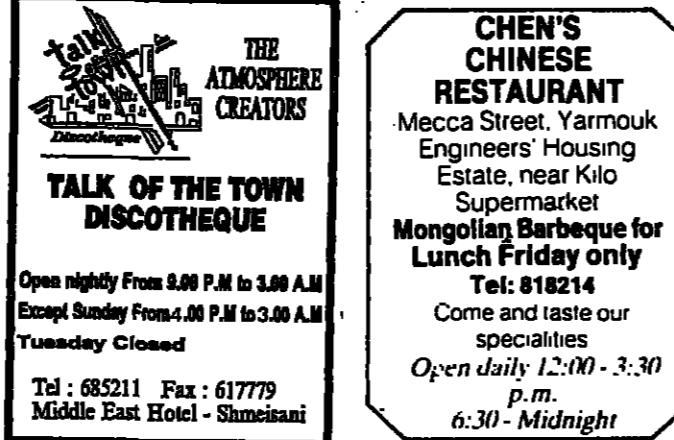
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More evacuations in Sydney as bushfires flare again

SYDNEY (R) — Evacuations resumed in Sydney's suburbs Sunday as bushfires that had been subdued by cooler weather began to flare up again only hours after officials declared the city's firestorm ordeal all but over.

"We are despatching every unit we have available down there," said a spokesman at Warringah Fire Control Centre as a huge fire bore down on houses in the northern suburb of Belrose.

People were also told to leave homes in the southern suburbs, where about 100 houses were destroyed by fires on Saturday.

Officials earlier said a wind shift and cooler weather had given weary firefighters the break they needed to lick what has been described as Australia's worst fire crisis in 200 years.

Police scrambled for their lives as a wall of fire 25 metres high roared through a roadblock on a major road in Sydney's north before heading into a heavily developed area.

Nearly 300 elderly people, some of them bedridden, were evacuated from the Belrose area after fires flared in the surrounding Garigal National Park.

The Warringah Centre was in the path of the runaway fire. A spokesman said flames up to

40 metres high were seen at the front of the outbreak.

"We've had a change in the wind — it has swung around to the northeast and now the fire that was previously going slow is moving quite dramatically," he said.

"It is really ripping up through this bush," a national parks spokesman said in a radio interview.

The fires, many lit by arsonists, have razed at least 150 homes in Sydney's heavily wooded suburbs in the past two days, including 89 in the southern suburb of West Como Saturday.

The official death toll is four, including a woman who was engulfed in a fireball as she sought refuge in the swimming pool of her home at Jannali in southern Sydney Saturday. Her two step-daughters suffered serious burns.

Hundreds of people were treated by ambulance crews Saturday and 56 were admitted to hospital. There were no reports of injuries in Sunday's outbreak.

About 120 fires continued to burn in New South Wales. Australia's most populous state. About 7,500 firefighters are battling the blazes, backed by military units.

After a shift of wind and cooler temperatures Monday

morning, officials said it appeared the worst was over.

We're confident that if this weather holds for two or three days we should, at the end of that time, have all fires in New South Wales contained," said Phil Koperberg, head of Fire Services for New South Wales.

"We have seen unprecedented fire in this country," Mr. Koperberg said.

"We will come out of this with losses, tragic as they are, of more than 150 structures — it should have been, conservatively, 5,000 structures."

Mr. Koperberg said later that firefighter fatigue was now a significant factor in the battle and welfare services including counselling for firefighters were being set up.

"They have been through the most horrendous experience, it's not just tiredness," he said. "These people have been subjected to the most incredible stress. They have lost some of their colleagues in this unprecedented battle and naturally that will have an effect."

Mr. Koperberg said offers of assistance to fight the fires had come from the United States, France and New Zealand, but there were no plans to accept outside help beyond the teams that had arrived from Australia's other states.

Main north-south highways leading to and from Sydney remained blocked for the third day because of dangerous conditions, stranding hundreds of people who whiled away the time by picnicking on the side of the road.

The north-south rail line was also blocked. Food and water were being brought in by helicopter.

The Weather Bureau was forecasting a top temperature in Sydney of about 24 degrees Celsius (79 degrees Fahrenheit).

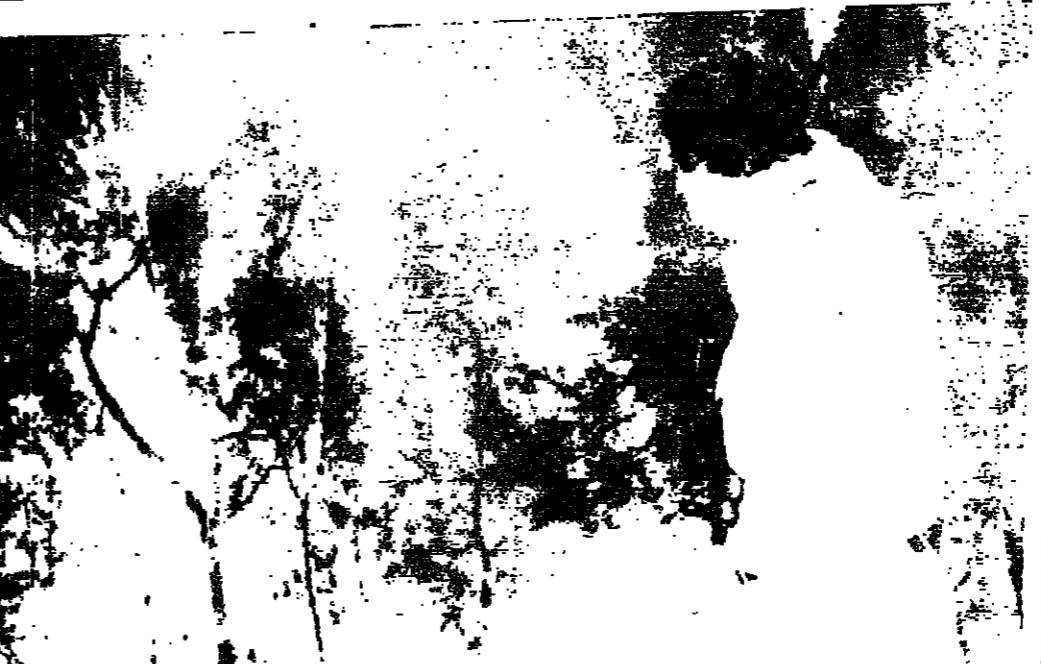
Temperatures in Sydney had approached 40 degrees Celsius (104 degrees Fahrenheit) in recent days, setting off tornadoes of fire.

At Wimmalee in the Blue Mountains west of Sydney, 10 homes were lost overnight as a fire passed through the town twice.

Fire officials planned a controlled burning operation over a 50-kilometre front to defeat the fire.

The affluent Sydney suburbs of St. Ives, North Wahroonga and Duffy's Forest in the north were expected to be under threat later Sunday night, fire officials said.

The Gosford area, about 100 kilometres north of Sydney, was also considered a potential danger area.



A north shore resident watches anxiously as a fire approaches his property in Sydney (AP photo)

2 more blasts hit Mexico City area

MEXICO CITY (R) — Two more explosions occurred in the Mexico City area Saturday night, targeting an electrical tower and a military base, local radio reported.

No injuries were reported and there were no claims of responsibility, a broadcast report said.

A bomb planted in a pickup truck exploded outside a gate of Military Camp No. 1 in Naucalpan, in the Mexico City Valley, Radio Red reported.

Two other bombs, placed at the foot of an electrical tower in nearby Cuautitlan exploded at 11:30 p.m. (0530 Sunday GMT) the station reported.

Police confirmed the bombings but released no details on damages and would only say they were investigating.

Earlier Saturday, a powerful car bomb rocked Mexico City, days after rebels staging a rural uprising in southern Mexico vowed to bring their insurrection to the capital.

The government meanwhile announced the arrest of a Guatemalan said to be a commander of the peasant force, which launched a rebellion in the southernmost state of Chiapas near the Guatemalan border on New Year's day.

Assailants also tossed a grenade at a federal government building in the Pacific resort of Acapulco Saturday.

Elsewhere, the Puebla newspaper Sintesis reported that the Zapatista rebels had offered to open negotiations with the government through three mediators.

Radio Red said two of the three mediators requested by the Zapatistas, Nobel peace prize laureate Rigoberto Men-

chu, a Guatemalan Mayan Indian, and Chiapas Bishop Samuel Ruiz had agreed to negotiate.

Police said no one immediately claimed responsibility for either the car bombing, which injured one person, or the grenade attack in Acapulco, which caused no injuries.

But the car bomb explosion follows repeated threats by the Zapatistas, who attacked six towns in the southern state of Chiapas on New Year's Day, to bring their fight to the capital.

Late-night revellers who streamed out of bars after hearing the explosion said slogans had been painted on street walls, some announcing "we've arrived."

"Up to now, no group has taken responsibility," said Arturo De Aquino, spokesman for the Mexico City attorney general's office.

The bomb, planted in a stolen car left in a deserted underground parking lot in a commercial complex, exploded with enough force to shatter shop windows on the ground level.

"The explosion was very, very strong, everything shook," said Raul Mejia, who was having drinks at the Sanborns Restaurant above the parking lot.

An arm of the Zapatistas told the newspaper La Jornada Wednesday that the group, responsible for the biggest uprising in Mexico in more than 20 years, was not targeting civilians in its fight against the "centres of oligarchy."

The attorney general's office Saturday confirmed that the group was responsible for top-

pling three electrical towers in Puebla and Michoacan, two states near the capital.

The rebels stopped short of offering a ceasefire, however, and said they would never turn in their weapons.

Army reinforcements poured into Chiapas Saturday as soldiers continued searching for rebels in the mountains around San Cristobal de Las Casas and other towns in Chiapas that have seen heavy fighting in the past week.

The latest fighting has been reported deep in the hills, populated mostly by Indians of Mayan descent. The government has estimated the rebels number about 2,000.

More than 100 people — and possibly as many as 400 according to church sources — have been killed in the fighting in Chiapas, which shares a border with war-torn Guatemala as well as a long record of human rights abuses against Indians.

The Zapatistas say in pamphlets delivered to newspapers and news agencies in Mexico City that they want to overthrow the government and to liberate the indigenous people.

But the government has denied that the revolt is an indigenous or peasant uprising and said repeatedly that foreigners were suspected of leading the rebellion.

The Mexican attorney general's office said Saturday it had arrested a Guatemalan citizen in the eastern state of Tabasco described as a "secondary leader" of the Zapatistas and one of the principal field commanders. It did not identify the suspect or give further details.

Boy sentenced to time in wheelchair

DADE CITY (APP) — A 12-year-old boy convicted in a shooting that left a teenager temporarily paralysed was sentenced to speed time in wheelchair, to get a feel for what he did to his victim. The boy, Raymond Thomas, also was ordered to visit a prison, pay restitution and perform 200 hours of community service. He will remain in state custody until his 19th birthday. Circuit Judge Lynn Tepper said Thomas should get a taste of the life he created for 16-year-old Reggie Haines, who after months in a wheelchair can walk with a cane. "You're going to be moving around in Reggie's world," the judge said in pronouncing the sentence Friday. "You will go to the bathroom in a wheelchair, you will get out of bed, eat, try to drink from the water fountain in a wheelchair." After two days in the wheelchair, Thomas will be required to use a walker for a week and then a cane.

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Elvises come to Memphis for King's birthday

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (AP) — "Flying Elvises" sporting paste-on sideburns and rented jumpsuits hustled to Memphis, taking advantage of low one-day air fares to celebrate Elvis Presley's 59th birthday. Bill Gannaway of Fort Worth, Texas arrived in Memphis in rented Elvis splendor after buying a \$59 round-trip ticket.

He was accompanied by friends Fred and Ray Wilkinson, who also were wearing spangled, somewhat weathered jumpsuits. Because of their attire, they and their wives got \$20 off on the \$79 fare from Dallas on American Airlines. They also got to ride Presley's former residence, Graceland, generally draws about 1,200 visitors on his birthday. But largely because of the low air fares, 4,000 to 5,000 people were expected to tour the house. Graceland draws 650,000 visitors a year.

Bob Chappelle, John Cooper and Ken Griffin wore paste-on cardboard sideburns and called themselves The Flying Elvises, Huntsville, Ala., Chapter.

They flew in on \$59 round-trip tickets with Northwest Airlines. They said their group drew its name from the movie Honeymoon in Vegas, which features a jumpsuit skydiving team called itself The Flying Elvises, Utah Chapter.

The mini-war on Elvis Day air fares was started by Northwest, which has a hub in Memphis and offered low rates from 34 cities. The other airlines quickly jumped in with deals of their own.

False spring rouses bears from winter slumber

WARSAW (APP) — Hibernating Polish bears have left their winter lairs after being roused from sleep by unseasonably warm weather, a forestry official in the mountainous Krosno region of southeast Poland said Saturday. Forestry workers in the Bieszczady Mountains have spotted several different sets of bear tracks made in recent days, the official told the Polish News Agency (PAP). Some 60 bears live in the mountain area, which is part of the Eastern Carpathians near the border with Slovakia and Ukraine.

Bosnia fighting clouds peace talks

VITEZ, Bosnia (R) — Muslim forces appeared to have launched a fierce offensive on a Croat enclave in central Bosnia Sunday, just hours before representatives of the two sides were due to hold peace talks in Germany.

At least four people were killed, including three children, and more than 30 were injured in heavy shelling of Vitez and bitter fighting in surrounding villages, local hospital and morgue officials said.

Reporters saw panicky Croat soldiers moving landmines when they were surprised by a sudden pre-dawn attack from the high ground to the north of the enclave.

The U.N. in Vitez said the fighting appeared to be initiated by the Muslim forces surrounding the pocket, but could not confirm the number of casualties.

"It is probable that Muslims have started the attack, but we cannot be certain...," a British officer told Reuters from Vitez. "The pocket is surrounded by the Muslims, so it would appear that they have advanced."

He said British forces were helping to evacuate civilians from the villages lying on the main road through the encircled area.

Two British army armoured personnel carriers evacuated some two dozen people from the area of Dubravice to the relative safety of Vitez town, the officer said.

Fighting came perilously close to the barracks of the Belgian transport battalion, whose 150 members were given protection by British soldiers in armoured vehicles.

Ivan Saric, spokesman of the local Croat Defence Council (HVO) said they were concerned for the fate of 50 to 60 civilians living in the area, which came under fierce artillery and infantry attack early in the morning.

The Bosnian Croat Defence Ministry, quoted by the Croatian News Agency (HINA), admitted losing a strategic village lying on the main road between Vitez and Busovaca to the Muslims.

One soldier was killed on the Croatian side, the report said, adding that the HVO was launching a counter-offensive aimed at retrieving the lost positions.

Mr. Saric said some 40 shells fell on Vitez itself.

The latest fighting broke out just hours before peace talks between the two sides were due to start in Germany.

The Bosnian and Croatian presidents were due to meet in Bonn later Sunday to discuss plans for an end to Croat-Muslim fighting before full peace negotiations with Bosnia's third warring party, the dominant Serbs.

The meeting was postponed from Saturday after the Bosnian President, Alija Izetbegovic, was unable to fly out of Sarajevo because of shelling.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Bhutto's sister seeks to end family feud

KARACHI (APP) — The sister of Pakistan Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto has embarked on a bout of shuttle diplomacy among her relatives in an attempt to end the feud between the premier and her mother Nusrat Bhutto, sources said Sunday. Sanam Nasir Hussain's reconciliation attempts over the weekend included visits to her jailed brother Murtaza Bhutto, her sister and her mother, the political and family sources said. Ms. Sanam spent about 10 hours with her sister at the prime minister's house in Naudero Thursday, administration sources said, adding that the prime minister might meet her estranged mother soon. However a spokesman for Nusrat Bhutto said no invitation had been extended and a meeting between mother and daughter was highly unlikely. Nusrat Bhutto, it's still very angry after the violence in Larkana last Wednesday, the spokesman added. At least one man was killed and six others injured when supporters of Murtaza Bhutto clashed with police outside the family home there. Nusrat supports her son Murtaza, who was arrested on charges of involvement in terrorism on his return to Pakistan last November after 16 years of self-exile. He is standing trial at a special court in Karachi.

7 killed in Kashmir

NEW DELHI (APP) — Seven people were killed overnight in the northern state of Kashmir as Muslim clerics threatened to launch a strike over security arrangements at Kashmir's holiest mosque, the Press Trust of India said Sunday. Four Muslim militants were among those killed in secessionist-linked violence, officials said in the state summer capital Srinagar Sunday. Three bodies were recovered from other spots, they said. Grenade attacks, house-breaks and one kidnapping have also been reported. Meanwhile, the all party Kashmir Freedom Conference encompassing 27 Muslim political and militant groups have renewed a call for a general strike Monday to protest the presence of security forces around Srinagar's Hazratbal Mosque. The lakeside shrine was besieged by militants for 32 days last year until their surrender on Nov. 16. It is still being guarded by the Border Security Force although the troops were reduced Saturday.

U.S. congressmen meet Angolan rebels

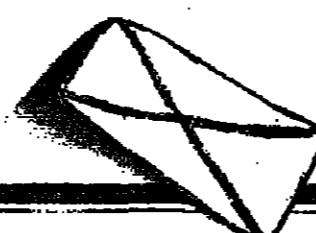
HARARE (R) — Four U.S. congressmen held talks with officials of Angola's rebel UNITA movement Sunday in Zimbabwe's northern resort of Victoria Falls. Western diplomats said they had met the Democratic congressmen led by Harry Johnston of Florida, who is chairman of the House of Representatives Subcommittee on Africa, talked to UNITA officials attending peace talks with government negotiators in neighbouring Zambia. UNITA (National Union for the Total Independence of Angola) spokesman Jorge Valentim told Reuters by telephone from Victoria Falls: "We are basically briefing them on what is going on at the peace talks and exchanging ideas. A lot of ground on political issues has yet to be covered. At the moment our negotiations with the government are on the need to reform the police force and to decentralize it by creating regional and national police forces." Diplomats say the peace talks, which opened in November, have agreed a ceasefire to Angola's 18-year-long civil war and merger of UNITA and government troops into a new national army.

U.S. senators urge end to Hanoi embargo

HANOI (R) — Five U.S. senators piled pressure on President Bill Clinton Sunday to lift the U.S. economic embargo against Vietnam and their leader said he believed Mr. Clinton would do so soon. The five — the majority of a seven-man Senate Energy Committee delegation — said they would recommend ending the embargo because of Vietnamese cooperation on the issue of U.S. servicemen listed as missing in action (MIA). The two other members, both Republicans, said they wanted to consult colleagues before committing themselves. Committee Chairman J. Bennett Johnston, a Louisiana Democrat, said he believed Mr. Clinton would accept the proposal. "Nothing will prevent him from taking that advice," Sen. Johnston told a news conference. "I'm in good hopes that he'll take that advice and drop the embargo and do so quickly."

Italy enters decisive week for future

ROME (R)</b



NEWS IN BRIEF

Schneider wins 26th World Cup slalom

ALTMARKT, Austria (R) — Switzerland's Vreni Schneider stormed to her 26th Alpine skiing World Cup slalom win Sunday and her 47th victory altogether. The Swiss triumphed in one minute 36.41 seconds. Sweden's Pernilla Wiberg, winner of a slalom in Morzine, France, Thursday, finished second in 1:36.98, ahead of France's Beatrice Filiole in 1:38.08. Wiberg, winner of two slaloms this season, collected 90 points to take the overall World Cup from defending champion Anita Wachter of Austria. Schneider, 1988 Olympic slalom and giant slalom gold medalist, scored 100 points for her win and also overtook Wachter to lie second overall behind Wiberg. Filiole, who started from 30th position to ski to a surprising third place in the first leg, recorded the best result in her career. Slovenia's Urska Hrovat, third in a slalom in Santa Catarina, Italy, in December, raced a powerful second leg and seemed set for a place on the podium before straddling a gate. She burst into tears in the finishing area.

Blair, Jansen qualify for Lillehammer

MILWAUKEE, Wisconsin (AFP) — Bonnie Blair will chase more gold and Dan Jansen will try to erase the memories of Olympic failure at Lillehammer next month after dominating the U.S. speedskating trials. Both were the top qualifiers at 500, 1,000 and 1,500 metres in this week's trials, earning them in their third Olympic games. Blair, the only woman to win the 500m at consecutive Olympics, also won the 1,000m in 1992 and finished third in that event in 1988. With one more medal, Blair would become the most decorated U.S. woman Olympian ever. Right now her tally of four equals that of swimmer Janet Evans, diver Pat McCormick and sprinter Evelyn Ashford. Jansen will be aiming for his first Olympic medal. Favourite in both the 500 and 1,000m in both 1992 and 1988, he came up short both times. In Hamar, Norway, Germany's Gunda Niemann won the women's overall European speed skating title Sunday with 167.282 points. Russia's Svetlana Bazhanova was second with 170.263 and Austria's Esme Hunyady third with 170.473 points.

Kafelnikov wins in Adelaide

ADELAIDE (R) — Emerging Russian talent Yevgeny Kafelnikov gained his first ATP Tour title with a straight sets win over compatriot Alexander Volkov in the final of the

Manager's wrath descends on English premiership club

LONDON (AFP) — QPR's Gerry Francis was one of several English premiership managers to be left fuming after Saturday's FA Cup upsets by their second division Stockport.

While Rangers went down 2-1, Chelsea finished goalless at home to Barnet and Tottenham Hotspur needed a late goal strike by Jason Dozzell to salvage a 1-1 draw against Peterborough, currently bottom of the second division.

"To say I am disappointed is an understatement," Hoddle said. "I take nothing away from Barnet. They have produced probably their best performance of the season."

"You need luck in the FA Cup and we had it today. We didn't deserve anything but defeat."

Barnet may not be in business for the replay, though, following the news from club chairman David Buchler.

"Our financial position is dire," he said. "We need to find one million pounds by Monday — and that is simply not available. We are going to ask for a further adjournment."

Clemence, who left Spurs as a coach at the end of last season, said: "I think it is a wonderful opportunity. People have said I must be mad to go to Barnet — but I've seen enough here today to know that we can climb out of trouble."

Stockport manager Danny Bergara said: "At times we played like a Premier League side. The lads were magnificent and the whole of Stockport should love them."

Andy Preece, the team's top

scorer whose 74th minute winner was a spectacular volley, said: "It was a good job it didn't come to me on my right foot because it could have gone anywhere."

Davenport wins Hardcourt title

BRISBANE (R) — Seventeen-year-old Lindsay Davenport won the second title of her short professional singles career when she defeated Argentina's Florencia Labat 6-1 2-6 6-3 to win the Australian Women's Hardcourt title Sunday. The powerful American, seeded second in the draw and already ranked 20th in the world, faded temporarily in the second set on another hot, humid day, but regained her concentration sufficiently to out-hit the inconsistent Labat from the baseline. The left-handed Argentine, seeded 11th, held serve only four times in a fluctuating match, but had the consolation of being the only player to take a set off Davenport during the tournament. After a grueling week during which on-court temperatures often soared above 50 degrees Celsius (122 degrees Fahrenheit), Davenport has opted to play only doubles at the New South Wales Open starting Monday. "I've played a lot of matches this week and need time to refresh myself before the Australian Open," she said.

Alma-Ata to bid for 2002 Olympics

LAUSANNE, Switzerland (AP) — Alma-Ata, capital of the former Soviet Republic of Kazakhstan, will bid for the 2002 Winter Olympics. The International Olympic Committee said in its weekly bulletin Saturday that it had received confirmation of the bid from the National Olympic Committee of Kazakhstan. Other cities that have announced bids for 2002 are Salt Lake City, Utah; Quebec City, Quebec; and Ostersund, Sweden. Switzerland is among others considering making a bid, as is the Russian resort of Sochi. The initial deadline for bids is Feb. 1. The IOC will select the host city in 1995. Salt Lake City is considered the strong favourite at this stage.

Kafelnikov wins in Adelaide

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scorer whose 74th minute winner was a spectacular volley, said: "It was a good job it didn't come to me on my right foot because it could have gone anywhere."

Chelsea chief Glenn Hoddle watched as his men were booted off the pitch after failing to destroy a team who were playing non-league football in 1991.

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"You need luck in the FA Cup and we had it today. We didn't deserve anything but defeat."

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"Our financial position is dire," he said. "We need to find one million pounds by Monday — and that is simply not available. We are going to ask for a further adjournment."

Keegan said: "I thought today our partnership was about as exciting as I've seen it. They are on the same wavelength."

Manchester City's hero was Norwegian international midfielder Kari Ingebrigtsen, who hopes that his hat-trick in the 4-1 win over Leicester City will help earn him a World Cup place.

"I need to be playing first

team football if I am to get into the Norwegian squad for the World Cup finals," he said, before thanking his teammates for giving him his chance.

The rest of the team set up for those goals today. They were perfect crosses from Terry Phelan for the first two."

There were mixed fortunes though for the two teams in the spotlight Friday after manager Mike Walker left Norwich City for premiership rivals Everton.

Everton clung on for a 1-1 draw against Bolton after Barry Horne was sent off.

"They would not lie down and die and that is important," Walker said. "Overall we have got to be pleased we are still in the game and the players worked really hard. It was always going to be a tough game."

Meanwhile, Norwich's caretaker boss John Deehan wants his future decided quickly after the Canaries beat Wycombe Wanderers 2-0 with both goals coming from Chris Sutton.

"I would love the job — it is as simple as that," Deehan admitted. "The sooner the managerial situation is sorted out, the better."

"When we arrived in London we went to a hotel, turned on the television and saw people saying 'Norwich will go downhill from here'. So the way the players got themselves up for the cup tie after that was marvellous."

"I need to be playing first

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Harding wins title; Kerrigan on Olympic figure skating team

DETROIT (Agencies) — Tonya Harding has won her second U.S. national figure skating title to earn a place on the Olympic team, where she will be joined by Nancy Kerrigan.

Kerrigan, the Olympic bronze medalist who would have been defending champion at this week's nationals, was unable to compete after being beaten on the leg by a club-wielding attacker following a Thursday practice session.

The 24-year-old Kerrigan, a gold medal favorite for next month's Winter Olympics in Lillehammer, was provisionally named to the team by U.S. figure skating officials.

The United States Figure Skating Association's 40-metre International Committee met immediately after the women's long free-skating programme and decided to give Kerrigan one of the two Olympic berths despite her inability to compete at the National Championships, which served as the

Olympic trials.

The committee found a rule that would enable them to select an athlete who did not compete at the most recent nationals.

"I don't think it's going to be hard to come back," said Kerrigan, who suffered severe bruising and swelling around her right knee from the attack.

Kerrigan watched Saturday's competition at Joe Louis Arena with her parents as a guest

T entered on for this year.

of Detroit Red Wings owner Mike Ilitch. It was the first time since 1984 that Kerrigan did not compete in the U.S. nationals.

Harding won her second national title with a near-flawless programme, but without her triple Axel. She won the title in 1991 when she became the first American woman to land a triple Axel.

Immediately after the competition, Harding, an asthmatic, had breathing problems and needed the portable respirator she carries with her.

"I'm on my way," said Harding, 23, who has had her own share of off-ice adversity, including death threats in November at her home rink.

Three-year-old Michelle Kwan finished second and was named an alternate to the Olympic team.

While a second-place finish would normally clinch an Olympic berth, Kwan said she didn't mind being replaced by Kerrigan in the U.S. team.

"I feel fine," Kwan said. "They both deserved to go to the Olympics."

Kerrigan will be monitored by her coaches and skating officials until the Olympics and will probably have to perform for a small panel of committee members before being allowed to go to Lillehammer.

"My job is to skate and I've done that this year," Kerrigan said. "I won both competitions T entered on for this year.

"From what I understand, we were counted out from the very beginning, because of our previous performance. Our previous performance before this," he said.

"I don't think that is fair, because we weren't ready at that time."

Figure skating judges often take previous performances, even practice performances, into account.

Courtland fell on her opening triple toe loop, and again on a throw triple toe loop.

She also tripped Reynolds, causing them both to fall, and duffed the landing of a double Axel.

Weeping, she defended their third place.

"We have a technically difficult programme and we have been skating it very clean," she said. "I know I had two falls, but everything else was well skated."

The only mistake from Kuchiki and Marval came on a throw triple salchow, one of the hardest moves in pair skating.

"It's all relative," Marval said. "We stayed on our feet. But it is all relative and everybody has different opinion."

Meno and Sand, who skated after Courtland and Reynolds, did not even try any triples.

Ina and Dungjen hit two throw triple jumps as well as side-by-side triple toe loops to claim second.

Torvill and Dean pick up where they left off

SHEFFIELD, England (R) — Almost as if they had never been away, Jayne Torvill and Christopher Dean made light of a 10-year absence and scaled the peaks of perfection at the British Ice Dancing Championships.

A complete set of maximum 6.0 scores rained down on them for their new routine Saturday as they captured the title for the first time in a decade and stamped themselves as strong bets for European, Olympic and world gold medals over the next two months.

Their nine 6.0s for the artistry of their jaunty Let's Face The Music And Dance number matched the scores awarded them for artistry in the peerless Bolero at the Sarajevo Winter Olympics in 1984.

They also received one 6.0

for technical merit and four more for their rumba in the original dance Friday, giving them a haul of 41 for the week.

And yet their comeback routine bore little resemblance to Bolero.

The International Skating Union (ISU) saw to that. At the same time as they voted in 1992 to allow professionals back into competition, they imposed new rules regarding music on ice dancers to force them away from the theatrical melodramas which had taken over in free programmes in recent years.

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Torvill and Dean led that movement in the early 1980s and they emerged Saturday as the leaders of the new approach.

Their skating to the Irving Berlin music, from a 1936 Hollywood film starring Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers, was technically breathtaking.

It may not tug at the emotions as Bolero did — the rules prevented that — but it should certainly stand up to whatever the Russians throw at them in the European Championships next week.

Title-holders Maya Usova and Alexander Zhulin, who are also the world champions, will have their work cut out for them in Copenhagen.

But already the anticipation is building over what they may produce to take on Torvill and Dean.

The battle is far from decided.

European judges may be more stingy with their 6.0s than the British panel were.

The Britons, 36 and 35 respectively, were delighted with their performance Saturday.

"We couldn't have skated it any better," Torvill said.

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Israeli mayor wants biological institute moved

TEL AVIV (R) — An Israeli mayor said Sunday he wanted a biological research centre kicked out of town after French newspapers said it was making biological weapons. Mayor Yossi Shvo of Nes Ziona near Tel Aviv said he would take his complaint to Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin. The French reports said scientists at the New Ziona biological institute were working on 43 types of biological and other non-conventional weapons. "I will ask the prime minister to remove the biological institute immediately outside the municipal boundaries," Mr. Shvo told Reuters. "I don't think any military installation should be in the middle of a population centre." Asked about reports biological weapons were being made at the plant, Mr. Shvo said: "I never visited there. But I heard that and if it is true, it is worrying." The newspapers were investigating the case of Professor Marcus Klingberg, an Israeli germ warfare specialist who worked at the institute and was jailed secretly by Israel on charges he was a top Soviet spy.

Moi sees closer Kenyan-Israeli ties

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Daniel Arap Moi began the first visit to Israel by a Kenyan president on Sunday predicting stronger relations, more than 30 years after the two countries opened diplomatic ties. "We are happy to be visiting your country at a time when real opportunity for peace in the Middle East region is in sight," Mr. Moi told his host President Ezer Weizman. He saluted Israel's "courageous act" in signing an autonomy deal with the Palestinians last Sept. 13. He was to hold talks with Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and Foreign Minister Shimon Peres.

U.N. team prepares transfer of Iraqi uranium

BAGHDAD (AFP) — International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) experts are preparing the transfer of a second batch of Iraqi enriched uranium to Russia, U.N. sources said here Sunday. The team is working at a site near Baghdad, the sources said without specifying the quantity involved. Last month the same group supervised the removal and shipment by air of 33 kilograms of irradiated fuel from Iraq to Russia.

Fake McDonalds creates row in Iran

TEHRAN (AFP) — Iranian authorities have ordered a ham-burger restaurant here to serve strictly Persian food after Islamic activists accused it of being McDonalds' first branch in Iran, a newspaper reported Sunday. Radicals forced the postponement of the opening of "rafaq" restaurant after its advertising led them to believe it was the American fast food chain, the daily Kayhan said. Scores of activists gathered last week for several days in front of the restaurant in a fashionable street in Tehran and several threatened the management, it said. "Our brothers have not become martyrs for American corporations to find business in Iran again," one of the activists was quoted as saying. A Culture Ministry official contacted by Kayhan on Sunday said the restaurant had been ordered to serve strictly Persian food.

Sudan rebels agree to stop fighting

NAIROBI (R) — Rival Sudanese rebel factions have agreed to a ceasefire after talks in Nairobi with representatives of regional governments, John Garang, leader of the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA), said. He told reporters Riek Machar, leader of the rival SPLA-United, which has split from Colonel Garang's group, had joined him in the ceasefire undertaking. Col. Garang spoke on Saturday after talks with ministers from Ethiopia, Eritrea, Kenya and Uganda, members-states of the Inter-Governmental Agency for Drought and Development (IGADD). No official statement was issued by the ministers who failed to broker direct talks between the rebels and officials of the Khartoum government who flew to Nairobi last week for the meeting.

Iranians brawl leaves one dead in Japan

TOKYO (AFP) — A brawl among a dozen Iranians at a police station left one dead and another in a coma in Utsunomiya, 100 kilometers north of Tokyo Saturday, police said Sunday. Nine people were arrested in the incident, a spokesman said. The Iranians had initially been charged with overstaying their visas. Iranian migrants make up a large portion of illegal foreign workers in Japan.

Egypt wants to improve ties with Iran

TEHRAN (AFP) — Egypt has proposed starting a dialogue with Iran to end tension between the two countries, the head of Egypt's interest section, Mahmud Mohammad Faraj said. In an interview with the Iranian weekly Kayhan Havas, Mr. Faraj said his country hoped for "positive developments" in Tehran-Cairo ties and called for a dialogue to create the "appropriate atmosphere" for better relations. Mr. Faraj said that efforts were already underway to mend ties through economic contacts and that the two countries had launched joint ventures in textile and electronics.

Nateq Nuri slams Pope for recognising Israel

TEHRAN (AFP) — Iran's Speaker of Parliament Ali Akbar Nateq Nuri on Sunday blasted Pope John Paul II for the Vatican's recognition of Israel, saying the move was an insult to the image of Christ. "The fact that the Pope has sanctioned the crimes of Israel is nothing new to us," Mr. Nateq Nuri said. "What is important is committing such an act on the birth anniversary of Christ." The move to recognise the Zionist regime was the greatest insult to the image of the Christian prophet. Several Iranian newspapers have also denounced the Vatican for signing the Dec. 30 accord with Israel which they described as "treason."

More than 40 people killed in Turkey clashes

ANKARA (AFP) — More than 40 people have died in clashes between Kurdish separatists and the security forces in the last three days, the regional prefecture spearheading the fight against rebel Kurds said Sunday. Some 31 Kurds and 10 government soldiers have died in fighting since Thursday, the authorities said in a statement. Nineteen fighters from the Kurdish Labour Party (PKK) were killed in a large-scale anti-rebel sweep in the Marcin, Sırnak and Sıirt regions of southeastern Turkey on Thursday, the prefecture said.

Zhirinovsky softens tone

MOSCOW (R) — Vladimir Zhirinovsky, the extreme nationalist who has shocked the world with his dream of massive Russian expansion, courted Washington Saturday by calling instead for strong democracy and cooperation with the West. "We stay as a democratic state," Mr. Zhirinovsky said in a television interview with CNN. His party became the largest single group in Russian politics when it won about a seventh of votes in December parliamentary elections. U.S. President Bill Clinton is due to visit Moscow next week for a summit with his Russian counterpart Boris Yeltsin and Mr. Zhirinovsky, abruptly softening earlier that comments about the Washington leader, said he would like to meet him. "I have a good opinion of him," Mr. Zhirinovsky said. Earlier, he had said Mr. Clinton should not waste his time on the trip and should instead stay at home and "play his saxophone." Mr. Zhirinovsky also appealed for Mr. Clinton not to support Mr. Yeltsin, whose government he criticised, and made a bid for an alternative relationship between the U.N. leader and himself. "He (Clinton) is the same age. He is 47 and I am 47. Maybe he has no information about me... I would like to tell him now it's necessary to have good relations between America and Russia."

Clinton begins Europe visit; NATO on agenda



U.S. President Bill Clinton listens to Belgian Prime Minister Jean-Luc Dehaene during a meeting Sunday at Brussels' Conrad Hotel shortly after he arrived in Belgium on his first visit to Europe after taking office in 1992. (AFP photo)

As Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic — something those nations aspire to.

The allies fear that absorbing Moscow's former allies too quickly will aggravate nationalist sentiments in Russia.

The summit is being held against the backdrop of the civil war in Bosnia.

"We'll discuss that and a number of other issues," Mr. Clinton said at his hotel.

Despite initial French calls for a tougher stand on that war, the leaders are not expected to offer new initiatives to end the carnage on the alliances doorstep.

They will likely do no more than renew their willingness to bomb Serb forces to end the

strangulation of Sarajevo and restate an offer to help implement a Bosnian peace plan, officials said.

In 1993, the allies quarreled for months how to stop the war and disagreed on who should initiate military action: NATO or the United Nations.

The allies enforce a "no-fly zone" over Bosnia and a naval blockade against Serbia and Montenegro, the two remaining republics of what was once Yugoslavia. It is ready to send 50,000 peacekeeping troops but only if Bosnia's warning sides sign a peace accord.

But NATO has yet to deliver on a pledge to launch air strikes against Serb forces that attack aid convoys and besiege

Sarajevo because the United Nations has not given the green light.

Officials said Mr. Clinton planned to announce a March date for a Group of Seven (G7) conference on creating jobs that he proposed last July.

At the meeting, in the United States, education, labour and finance ministers of the world's industrial powers will discuss how to overcome chronic unemployment.

Mr. Clinton will also urge Western Europe to open its markets to help strengthen democracy in East Europe and Russia, talk about the gradual expansion of NATO and call anew for more efforts to curb

nuclear arms, a U.S. official said.

The United States and Russia are very close to a deal with Ukraine that would rid the former Soviet Republic of atomic weapons, U.S. officials said.

They told Reuters some details remained to be worked out, but that an agreement could be signed later this week.

In Kiev, an official said President Clinton will meet his Ukrainian counterpart Leonid Kravchuk on Wednesday.

The two presidents will discuss "nuclear disarmament, economic cooperation and security guarantees" called for by Ukraine "linked to dismantling of its nuclear arsenal," the sources said.

Although the reported deal promises Ukraine political and economic benefits, it also requires the ex-Soviet republic to turn Menem's picture in the wee hours of Friday at a Puma Del Este nightclub. They also are alleged to have roughed up a fashion designer.

The photographer who filed the complaint, Henry Von Wartemberg, said Mr. Menem's group also stole \$3,000 worth of camera equipment from him.

"All of them hit me," Carlos (Facundo) Menem and the others, Mr. Von Wartemberg told a news conference. He said the president's son should learn to behave. Saying "we are not in Argentina. Nor is this the 1920s. He is not Al Capone and here in Uruguay he is no one," President Menem said Justice should run its course.

The possibility that Ukraine might keep the weapons and hence expand the number of nuclear states has been seen in Washington and many other capitals as a serious problem.

Israeli right to propose settlement 'annexation'

TEL AVIV (AP) — Israeli opposition lawmakers will introduce bills this week to annex Jewish settlements in the occupied West Bank surrounding Jerusalem, right-wing legislators said Sunday.

The legislation, which is scheduled for debate Wednesday, is unlikely to pass unless members of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin's Labour Party break ranks and vote with the opposition which labour leaders said was unlikely.

Even so, the bills and what is likely to be a noisy debate could be an irritant at a sensitive time in the negotiations between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) on Palestinian autonomy, which are to resume Monday in Egypt.

Yigal Bibi from the National Religious Party said the bill will be introduced to the Likud's party in the Knesset but includes the West Bank settlements of Givat Ze'ev, home to 7,200 and Betar, with about 2,000 residents, as well. Mr. Bibi told the Associated Press.

Both the Labour-led coalition government and opposition parties have called for a general mobilisation of all 120 parliament members for a vote on the legislation.

Mr. Ben-Elissar said he was hoping some Labour legislators who have openly supported strengthening the Etzion Bloc and Maaleh Adumim would vote for the bill.

Eli Dayan, head of the Labour Party-led coalition in parliament, attacked the bills as attempts to torpedo the peace process and said all coalition legislators would vote against the bills.

"There is no chance that this bill will pass," said Emanuel Zisman, former deputy mayor of Jerusalem and Labour legislator.

All labour parliament members understand that if it did (pass) it would halt the peace process."

Palestinians said that while passage of the bills would make peace talks more difficult in the future, it was not likely to strengthen Israel's hold on the city.

"We do not think that changing the status quo in Jerusalem will let the Israelis run away with the city so easily," said Radwan Abu Ayash,

an adviser to Palestinian peace negotiators.

He said he wants to test assurances by Rabin's government that the settlements were part of a non-negotiable "sear-

Balladur's Saudi trip falls short of hopes

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AP) — An Israeli human rights group Sunday urged the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) and other Palestinian groups to stop killing Palestinians because they were suspected of being informants for Israel or involved in drug dealing and homosexuality.

Between 750 and 950 suspected Palestinian "collaborators" have been killed since the start of the Palestinian uprising in Dec. 1987, many after being severely tortured and all without trial, the group said.

The unprecedented report on collaborators by Betselem, the Israeli Information Centre for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories, was its first on human rights violations by armed Palestinian groups. Previously it had focused on the human rights abuses of Israeli forces.

The report explicitly condemns the PLO and Islamic fundamentalist groups for allowing such "gross human rights violations" to continue by not enforcing clear cut international guidelines that ban torture and require a trial.

The human rights group said it only focused on the issue now because the Palestinian political factions were seeking recognition akin to political parties and because of "the scale of human rights violations perpetrated by activists of these organisations against suspected collaborators during the past six years," Betselem said.

France will also overhaul the Saudis' French-made Shahine anti-aircraft defence system and maintain the Crotale missile's firing system.

The three contracts, worth about 10 billion francs (\$2 billion), are expected to be finalised in coming weeks, said Defence Minister Francois Leotard, who accompanied Mr. Balladur along with Foreign Affairs Minister Alain Juppe and Industry and Trade Minister Gerard Longuet.

France had wanted to sell Riyadh three new missile-launching frigates, worth a total of 20 billion francs (\$3.4 billion), but it appeared no deal was reached.

In another disappointment to France, Paris and Riyadh failed to sign a cooperation accord aiming to stimulate trade, including oil and arms.

Members of the delegation said Saturday they expected a comprehensive cooperation agreement to be reached, which would lead to signing of major contracts.

Multi-billion dollar deals for selling airbus planes and military equipment had appeared almost tied up, several French ministerial sources said.

However, no contract was formally concluded, even though Mr. Balladur and his team put a positive spin on their meetings during the press conference here, which was not attended by any Saudi officials.

According to the paper "U.N. inspectors have found that U.K.-made computers, electronics and machine tools were used in Iraq's nuclear bomb production line."

"We reaffirmed our determination to develop our industrial cooperation," he said.

The findings imply that British companies were not

Betselem urges Palestinians to end 'collaborator' killings

collaborators has become more urgent.

The Associated Press counts 789 suspected collaborators killed since the uprising began in December 1987.

Many others were shot in the legs or had bones broken as punishment for suspected collaboration as well as moral and social transgressions such as drug dealing, prostitution and homosexuality.

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The human rights group also called on Israel to stop recruiting "collaborators," saying Israeli security forces used pressure, threats, extortion and promises of services and permits to get informants.

British firms supplied Iraqi bomb programme

LONDON (AP) — The British government has failed to act over a key U.N. weapons inspectors' report which revealed sophisticated British computer and electronic equipment was used by Iraq's nuclear bomb industry, a newspaper claimed Sunday.

The human rights group said that since the Israel-PLO accord for Palestinian autonomy was signed on Sept. 13 the problem of protecting and rehabilitating thousands of overt

defence lawyers in the "nuclear triggers" case have recommended the organisations sever financial and organisational ties with groups that continue to commit such acts and to prosecute those who ignore the instructions.

The human rights group also called on Israel to stop recruiting "collaborators," saying Israeli security forces used pressure, threats, extortion and promises of services and permits to get informants.

Their lawyers believe the U.N. papers prove their clients' innocence as the import-export firm for which they worked is not on the list of British firms which supplies the Iraqi weapons industry.

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COLUMN 8

Menem's son jailed for punching photographer

PUNTA DEL ESTE, Uruguay (AFP) — Argentine President Carlos Menem's son was spending the weekend in jail here for allegedly punching a photographer at a discotheque in this gilty seaside resort.

In Kiev, an official said President Clinton will meet his Ukrainian counterpart Leonid Kravchuk on Wednesday.

The two presidents will discuss "nuclear disarmament, economic cooperation and security guarantees" called for by Ukraine "linked to dismantling of its nuclear arsenal," the sources said.

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